Class PZ3

Book .W677aM

Copyright No.

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

MARY STARKWEATHER

372

1481

BY

COROLIN CRAWFORD WILLIAMSON

THE

Abbey Press

PUBLISHERS

114

FIFTH AVENUE

London NEW YORK Montreal

PZ3
.W6772M

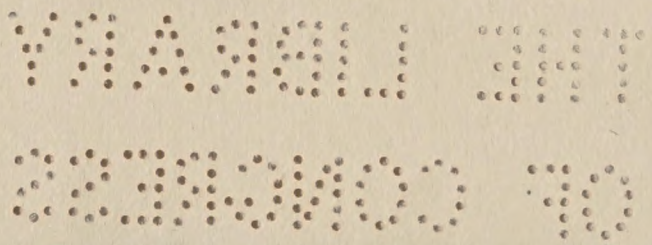
THE LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS,
TWO COPIES RECEIVED
NOV. 16 1901
COPYRIGHT ENTRY
Nov. 15-1901
CLASS a XXc. No.
21094
COPY B.

Copyright, 1901,

by

THE

Abbey Press



DEDICATED

TO MY

MOST DUTIFUL AND BELOVED SON,

ERNEST CRAWFORD.

For the Lord God *is* a Sun and Shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good *thing* shall he withhold from them that walk uprightly.—*Psalm 84: 11.*

Dorothy Crawford Williamson

A Conversation with the Author.

Mary Starkweather is a novel, pure and simple Numerous subjects are dealt with, chiefly among which is what is known as the New Thought or Higher Thought.

In the following conversation which the publishers had with the author, she gives the primary reason for writing the novel. We believe the reader will follow the conversation with interest.

The author has been most studious to avoid discussion, and has shown throughout her book a scrupulous regard for other people's beliefs and feelings. There is a decided absence of acrimony, with only a desire to awaken thought on the various subjects she puts forth.

PUBLISHER.—*Will you not tell us, Mrs. Williamson, how you came to evolve your novel, Mary Starkweather?*

AUTHOR.—*It was the outcome of experience, observation, and serious investigation, extending over a period of several years, in which I gained positive knowledge of the power of the mind to cure mental and physical ills.*

PUBLISHER.—*Were you an easy convert to this new belief?*

AUTHOR.—*No, I was not; I was born a skeptic, and although a member of the Episcopal church, I think I was really an agnostic. The creed of the Church always stuck in my throat. My skepticism militated against me, in this new study, and for a long time I was continually floundering in shoals and quick sands. But I believe in ocular demonstration, and having had such demonstration, I became thoroughly convinced of the supreme power of the mind. After this conviction came upon me I felt like a volcano—a very small volcano, it is true, but still a volcano, whose fires were welling below, longing to break forth, and give to others what I felt I had received.*

A Conversation with the Author.

I believe more in simple statements and demonstrations, than in elaborate arguments. I tried to think of some simple method that would go out and become an awakener; a forerunner; a sort of John the Baptist, as it were. At first it occurred to me that there is no better way to reach the attention, and to set people thinking, and eventually inculcate in them a deeper study, than through the medium of the stage. With this thought in mind I wrote the society drama, "Truth," which was produced at the Park Theatre, Boston. The newspapers were so generous in their praise, and I received so many letters from different people telling me of the benefit the play had been to them that I felt inspired to write a novel on the same lines. This I have done, including in it the principal characters and incidents of the drama "Truth," adding to this my beliefs in maternity; finally incorporating into the story a philanthropic project, that had simmered in my brain for years.

PUBLISHER.—*It required a good deal of courage, did it not, to launch this kind of a play before the public, and then follow it with this novel?*

AUTHOR.—*Yes; but when I undertook to write the book I knew I was qualified in one particular—a love of my subject—I have positive knowledge as to the power of the mind, in the matter of maternity, and of the efficacy of my philanthropic scheme; but qualified in positive knowledge of the great Hereafter, I was not. Therefore I make no attempt to instruct others in this mystery. So far as my observation goes I think all the ablest and most learned students can honestly say in regard to a future state is, "I believe," and belief is not knowledge.*

I am a firm believer in scientific demonstration, and in the unknown being made known; and I believe the mystery of life and death will one day be scientifically demonstrated and solved.

PUBLISHER.—*Why do you call this mental thought "Divine Science"? Do you not think it sacrilege?*

AUTHOR.—*Our most skilful physicians frankly confess they have found no cure for a mind diseased. In this science of the Mind a cure has been found. I feel there*

is no sacrilege in calling it a "Divine Science," since it came through the mind and intellect, and the mind and intellect are gifts from God; therefore a Divine gift. A perfectly healthy mind rarely, if ever, inhabits a diseased body. Health and ease throw off dis-ease. They are as opposite as the poles; they cannot exist together.

PUBLISHER.—*Then you think disease may eventually be overcome?*

AUTHOR.—*I do.*

PUBLISHER.—*Do you think death may be overcome?*

AUTHOR.—*I do not know. Personally I do not care for simple longevity—I care for usefulness and activity. When these cease it is time to go. But I think birth and death should be alike painless. When the time for dissolution comes we should simply be able to draw our drapery about us, and take our departure.*

PUBLISHER.—*Have you changed your religious views since coming into this new thought?*

AUTHOR.—*Yes, I think I have. In the past I don't think I had much religion; now I think I have a good deal. I believe in the teachings of Christ. I believe religion is that Love that has understanding, that penetrates the innermost parts of the heart and soul of the suffering, and understands and comforts and relieves. This I think is true religion, no matter where you find it, in Gentile, or Jew, Buddhist or Confucian.*

I do not believe in creeds or sects. It has been my intention that this book should stand for universal Brotherhood, irrespective of sect or creed. If it is not so understood, then its mission is lost.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

Hugh Starkweather of Mabelthorp Manor House..... 11

CHAPTER II.

Mary Starkweather 29

CHAPTER III.

The Repulse of Sidney Banks..... 45

CHAPTER IV.

Sidney Plans to Ruin the Starkweathers..... 57

CHAPTER V.

Sidney Is Foiled Again 66

CHAPTER VI.

The Homecoming of Charles Thornton 87

CHAPTER VII.

The General Tells Charles of the Mortgage..... 105

CHAPTER VIII.

A Strange Marriage 112

CHAPTER IX.

The Triumvirate 145

CHAPTER X.

Willow Springs..... 150

CHAPTER XI.

Harry Burbank Avows His Love..... 164

CHAPTER XII.

The Reunion of Old Friends 175

CHAPTER XIII.

The Awakening of Mr. Burton 189

CHAPTER XIV.

The Chatter of Carl and Gertrude 206

CHAPTER XV.

A Demonstration of Truth..... 215

CHAPTER XVI.

PAGE

Mrs. Tremaine Spurns Sidney Banks 241

CHAPTER XVII.

Doctor Cline 254

CHAPTER XVIII.

Bethesda Sanatorium and Cottage Place 268

CHAPTER XIX.

Society Is Shocked 274

CHAPTER XX.

Bethesda 298

CHAPTER XXI.

Puzzling Questions of Carl and Gertrude 309

CHAPTER XXII.

The Service in the Temple 334

CHAPTER XXIII.

She Will Do What Her Hands Find to Do 346

CHAPTER XXIV.

Mrs. Burton 350

CHAPTER XXV.

Mary Tries to Awaken Dick 356

CHAPTER XXVI.

Colonel Brandt's Family 361

CHAPTER XXVII.

Mental Telepathy 374

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Dick, Donald and Bennie Visit the Tenement District 396

CHAPTER XXIX.

A Visit to Goluckie 402

CHAPTER XXX.

A Visit to Bennie's Land 412

CHAPTER XXXI.

On Board the "White Pigeon" 427

CHAPTER XXXII.

Newport 440

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Thoughtless Chatter of Society Women 457

CHAPTER XXXIV.

PAGE

Mis-spent Energies 472

CHAPTER XXXV.

Last Speech of the Political Campaign 480

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The Opening of the Social Season 483

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The Meeting of Philanthropists 494

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Newspaper Criticism 510

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Dick Shows His Mettle..... 522

CHAPTER XL.

Edith Learns Her Mistake 536

CHAPTER XLI.

Dick Is Made Happy 551

CHAPTER XXII.

Seeds by the Wayside 560

CHAPTER XLIII.

The Anniversary 569

CHAPTER XLIV.

Again Is Sidney Banks Foiled 582

CHAPTER XLV.

Suicide 600

CHAPTER XLVI.

Wedding Bells 602

MARY.

MARY STARKWEATHER.

CHAPTER I.

HUGH STARKWEATHER OF MABELTHORP MANOR-HOUSE.

FAR to the north and to the south, along the banks of the Delaware, stretched an estate that had been princely in extent in the old Colonial days. On a high hill that commanded a sweeping view of the valley, stood the lordly old manor-house that was huge in its proportions, and had been built at enormous cost by Hugh Starkweather, a man of ample means and good taste; one of the very few to bring great wealth to this country in the early days. He belonged to one of the old English families, that, though not noble in the literal sense of the word, are yet so ancient and so connected by faithful service with the rise and progress of their country, that they could justly be comprised among the aristocracy of the land.

Hugh Starkweather had married, in defiance of his connection with the Established Church of England, a maiden of Puritan birth. Consequently he had collected his wealth, and had cast in his lot for weal or for woe with many other venturesome souls determined to find a home

in this new world beyond the sea, and thus escape persecution. And here, with nothing to pollute the primitive loveliness, where songs of birds filled the wilderness, and pearly waters rippled to the sea, they had planted their home.

Mabelthorp was much like the old gentry places in England. The house was two stories high, surmounted by an observatory. Two great wings stretched out on either side, and a broad veranda extended across the front, its roof supported by massive Corinthian columns, which, together with its snow-white walls gleaming among the gigantic trees, its long French windows and green shutters, made it singularly picturesque. It was one of the few homes that had come safely through the perils of the Revolution.

The Starkweathers were a brave and determined race; and when the War for Independence had broken out, their swords had been unsheathed and laid upon the altar of Freedom. The house had been attacked, and almost by miracles had been saved from the flames several times. The perilous experiences that had been encountered were heirlooms in the family. Many of the great elms, oaks, and maple-trees had histories that had been handed down from the time of their planting. In the days of the Revolution, many a half-starved, ragged, footsore regiment of soldiers had bivouacked under them, and many a prayerful congregation had gathered beneath their green boughs. Many were the perilous journeys undertaken through dark woods and over rough roads to reach Mabelthorp, and many a man had ridden with a lighter heart when the walls of the old manor-house rose before him, and he saw the lights gleaming from the windows. It was an asylum, a place of safety, during those long days of the Revolution; and many a beacon fire had been lighted on the hill to guide the wanderer to where his tired frame could rest.

Had there been bestowed half the blessings and benedictions that were showered on Mabelthorp and its surroundings, the place would have seemed like hallowed ground. It had been an unwritten law of the Starkweathers that no one with prayer or plaint should be turned unrelieved from their doors. It would seem that the text, "Freely ye have received, freely give," in their case was verified; for they always had an abundance.

Mabelthorp had been a regular rendezvous for statesmen and diplomats. Washington, Lafayette, Adams, Hamilton, Jefferson, Clay, and that "embryo Cæsar," Burr —"the man of many gifts"—Monroe, "the last cocked hat," as he was called—all these and many more had been partakers of Mabelthorp's generous, open-hearted hospitality, and at home there.

What names are these to conjure with! What memories must come trooping at the sound of them! There was hardly a phase of interest connected with the welfare of this country that had not been discussed beneath these old trees or in this house. How many projects had been hatched here, how many campaigns planned, by these men as they smoked with Indian gravity and deep concern in times of peril, or laughed when happier times had been evoked.

Cruel wars had come and gone. The strife for principle had ended. But those most devastating, fatal malalies, more fatal many times than war—the turbulent passions, the heart-burning jealousies, treachery and dishonor that fill the fierce conflicts—these had never entered this home. To come within its walls was to find rest, refreshment, and peace.

Two things had been made historical by the original Hugh Starkweather and his wife: First, the religious keeping of a diary, to be written in once a year at least. The

most important events connected with Mabelthorp were chronicled, to be handed down from generation to generation. Second, the planting of trees to commemorate important events or the visits of great personages to Mabelthorp. The trees can easily be seen with their little bronze plates, like bits of old armor, on which are recorded names and histories. But the diary is most sacredly and safely kept under lock and key. And favored indeed is the individual who can obtain a glimpse of it. To the historian it would be worth its weight in gold; for therein events are recorded of much that transpired during our wars, which have never become public property.

During the first days in this country, important occurrences were scarce; and there was not much to record beyond the impressions of one who had found great peace in this new land after the strife and turmoil of England. A few extracts that cover a period of the first twelve years that he lived in America, will serve to show what kind of a man this first Hugh Starkweather was. A letter written by his wife to a friend of her girlhood in England, that either was never sent, or had served as a copy for a more elaborate letter, there being many erasures and corrections—is most carefully preserved by the descendants, and is reproduced here only as a very great favor.

Extracts from the Diary of Hugh Starkweather.

April, 1740 A.D.

We bade adieu to England, not without misgivings and many tears, as we had many attachments and friendships to sever; and at the last moment the repeated expressions of affection from loved ones we were leaving behind, the

benedictions and prayers for choice blessings to come to us all, fell with great feeling upon our appreciative hearts. These friends are separated from us by leagues of land and sea, but we can never forget that farewell scene and the tender good-byes. It is a pleasure to think of them now. . . . . .

May, 1741.

. . . . It is wonderful how soon one becomes attached to a place—even in the wilderness. Nothing could induce us to give up our wildwood home with its blooming flowers and its kingly trees. All is silent here. Peace reigns. The stream that kisses the banks at the foot of the hill on which our home is perched, has not heard the contending of nations waging war for power, nor the deafening thunder and conflict of mighty hosts in battle until the earth trembles from the shock. The dusky inhabitants have left nature here unchanged. One is thrilled with the enchantment and beauty of it. What an asylum for rest! This is the place of green pastures, where one can lie down by the side of still waters. *Repose*—O, the music of that word! Here in this garden of nature one finds that rest and peace that the world cannot give. . . . . .

July, 1744.

How I thank God who has guided my weary feet to this refuge! What is birth or rank in a world where the flowers of love and peace reign and bloom in the heart? . . . . . .

In this new home the face of my dear wife is always radiant with smiles. Often at nightfall, when the heavens are star-studded, and holy silence seems to wrap the earth,

does she come out to me, and as she lays her hand in mine and nestles her beautiful head on my bosom, I stoop and kiss her brow. Standing thus, soul to soul, in this vast solitude, we hold communion with the winged spirits of this ideal world and feel we have passed from clouds to sunshine, and are already in the abode of immortal bliss, for here where His handiwork stands forth in lone sublimity we feel we are in the very presence of God Himself.

I pray that I may be enabled to make here a home; such an one that those coming after me, shall rise up and call me blessed and sing a requiem over my dust. Man's faith in God grows strong here. It is a place to purify the soul. Heaven seems very near at times. Living here in this majestic forest, with these tree-kings in whose branches the winds find harp-cords and organ-notes to respond to the chorus of birds that pour forth their melodies, time speeds swiftly. We are absorbed in the sweet task of planting our home in this wildwood. It seems almost a crime and a desecration to disturb Dame Nature who has held here undisputed sway for so long a time. The woods are filled with humble, yet beautiful and fragrant wild-flowers. One cannot live here without catching the spirit of beauty and peace, and the spirit of calm and adoration for all things high and holy and sublime in nature and in humanity. The very soul becomes illumined here. . . . . .

June 1st, 1752.

. . . After many delays our new home is completed and furnished, and to-morrow we step from our humble cottage to our elegant mansion. Rejoicing summers and winters have swiftly sped into the great eternity of time since we founded our home here, and there is much pleasure

in the anticipation of a more commodious mansion and more comforts. Yet, at this moment, we feel a solemn thought at leaving the walls and roof-tree where our children were born, and where we have been so happy. Under its humble roof my darling Mabel and I have garnered many of nature's most precious jewels. It was here the passing breeze, murmuring low, seemed a language simple and sweet, breathing upon us a prayer or benediction. Ah, it has been a very sweet time and of most precious remembrance! And we hope to have much joy in our splendid new home; but it never can give us more happiness than we have found in this humble cottage that we now turn over to our servants. But we have duties to perform and dignities to uphold, and we must look to them. . . . . .

How much we have to thank God for! Our barns are bursting with plenty, our fields are waving in luxuriance, and our fruit-trees are laden with blossoms. Our tenants seem happy. O, it's surely a time of rejoicing and thanks giving. Health abounds. Our children find so much life here. They are always leaping, bounding, and shouting. My wife is now very strong, and grows more beautiful and blooming every day. We give our wildwood home her maiden name—Mabel Thorp.

Mabel Starkweather's Letter.

October 10th, 1752.

"My dear Catherine: From Hugh's letters to Charles since leaving old England, thou knowest how we have fared these twelve years in this new land. But thou sayest thy wish is to have me write thee minutely of ourselves.

"It seems but a day since then and now. Hugh telleth the man's side of our life; but it's the wee things that interest us women. Dost think thou wilt like to hear how busy we've been? I am sure thou wilt, and to know also that there is no reason or desire to be sad and dumpish here. We have a large family, now, to mind and tend. Three blessed babies has God given us.

"Besides John and Hannah, the two servants we brought with us from old England, we have six blacks, Aunt Lissa, as we call her, and her husband, Joe, and her son, Bride, eighteen years old; and her daughter, Cassy, who is sixteen and mindeth the children. Hannah is now my housekeeper. John helpeth Hugh to look after the tenants, Aunt Lissa is the cook, Bride planteth and mindeth the garden, and Joe driveth our coach, and Patty and Milly mindeth the wash.

"The country is quite free, and I expect we've grown a bit wild through living in it; but it's lovely all the same, much because of the freedom. Except when we journey to the big cities, which happeneth not often, we don't mind here the dress. The simplest frocks answer our purpose. My hair hath no cushion nor powder, but flows most free. And when it's all loose and falls down from the comb, half in curl and half out and not tidy at all, then Hugh pats my head and says it is wild like our country, and as beautiful, because it is just as God made it. How men flatter! but 'tis sweet to have him say it. And then, goose that I be, I climb upon his knee, and then we sit silent and think. And he kisses me and tells me I am his world, and I tell him he is mine. Ah, it's awesome sweet to love so much and to be so loved. I mind me how our minister said 'twas weakness and a sin to love so much, and sometimes I have a fearsome feel-

ing. But Hugh saith if God is Love, then we cannot love too much; and my Hugh is very wise and good.

"We are so happy in this delightsome home. The music in the trees is, at times, most pathetic and entrancing sweet. Sometimes it's soft like a lute. I mind me when our little Hugh was born, how I lay in my bed, and listened and thought the wind angels were singing a lullaby to him. O, when he was born, it was a fearsome time! I must tell you of it. I felt it was a time of peril with no physician in attendance, and I was greatly agitated and feared I might die. Dear Hugh had prayed constantly that I might be safely delivered; but when the last moment came I was in a panic. And when Aunt Lissa, bless her black soul, saw me crying, she just took me up in her arms and put me to bed, and said:

"'Laws, honey! you'se all right. Don't yuh worrit the leas' bit. If yuh fret and cry like that, yuh'll be mighty fev'rish an' 'bad. Yuh jes' trus' t' Lissa. *She'll* bring yuh frou'. I'll make yuh a dish o' 'yarb tea an' mix yuh a good drink o' hot sperits.' And she coddled and patted me in the blithesomest and cheeringest way.

"'Yuh see, chile, you'se bin a runnin' an' a racin', an' had de fresh win' t' breave, an' you'se bin happy, an' it's made yuh well an' strong. So you'se got nothin' t' feah. Ef I cud jes' take it on myself, chile, Lissy 'ud be glad t' do it; but I carn't. But I kin help yuh an' nuss yuh. Yuh mus' be strong fur Marse Hugh's sake. *He* mos' scar'd t' def now—pale ez a sheet, wif great big tears a-runnin' down his face. He out dar a-sobbin' so, mos' like his heart break all ter smash. Yuh jes' be strong fur a little while, honey, an' trus' t' Lissy an' de good Lawd, who will give yuh strength, an' not lay mo' on yuh than you'se able t' b'ar.'

"Dear Hugh, who left England for me, whose life had

been given in love and tenderness for me! I knew in the willingest way he would bear my pain, if he could. And wilt believe it? These thoughts helped me marvelously; and thereupon I grew strong. I remembered as Lissa said, I had been living near to God and nature. I was full of life, and though it was a truly awesome time, I just laid myself on the dear Lord's breast and waited His will. And very soon it was over.

"And when Lissa laid the little one in Hugh's arms, he wept for joy and thanked God aloud. Ah! those were sweet days that followed for both of us. Hugh was more tender than ever, and I, think of it, Catherine dear, was I not the mother of a boy?

"Two blessed babies, William and Elizabeth, have come to share our home since then; and all is well. We have no fear of sickness. The little medicine-chest is rarely opened, and we never have had any physicians except our good Aunt Lissa.

"At last we are in our new mansion. It stands on a high hill, and the view is so mighty and God-like—more so in storm than in sunshine. When I look at the beautiful scenery, I most forget to breathe, and near die from pure joy. My dear Hugh sheds tears at the beauty of it.

"To get the house in order, and tidy, was an amazing lot of work; but it was a delightsome task. We were quite happy in the cottage whose furnishings, at first, would have puzzled thy brain to fancy. But we now have the loveliest and best, of which I must tell thee. First, a lovely new spinet on which it's a pleasure to play. Our furniture and carpets, from France, are most rich; and so are our pictures and mirrors from Venice. We can see our whole length in the mirrors; their gold frames are of most handsome design. But the curtains, O, Catherine, are gorgeous, as are the lamps with their pendants and

crystals to make the house brilliant. We brought much glass and plate from England; but we have had more sent, and an abundance of linen and stuffs.

"When we got these all placed in the fine house, every one said it was an elegant spectacle. We have a beautiful coach sent over from France. It is stuffed, and lined with red leather. We have grand horses to draw it, and Hugh has also a fine English charger, a beauty, to ride.

"It's a monstrous distinction to have such a smart place, and much deference is shown us on account of our money and plenty. But Hugh mindeth it not, and is never stiff with the people, or his tenants, who like him and pay when they can.

"We now have week-day, religious, and other assemblies in the town of Clinton that now joins our land on the west. The people are not gawkish, as thou wouldst imagine, but very brave, kind, and honest, with much intelligence, though mostly poor. We are friendly with all, and give a dish of tea and a good bite to all who visit us. Hugh helpeth much those that are needy, and it's a wonder he never is cheated, for he can never say nay.

"Hugh thought we must have a house-party to mark our time of removing. So he sent many invitations to friends in the big cities and colonies about, asking the favor and honor of the company of themselves and their ladies for a grand ball on the fifteenth of June. Even from the rich to the poorest, nigh all accepted. For Hugh mindeth not the raiment, religion, or creed; his only thought when he bids folk to his house is, 'Are they good?'

"Then came a time of commotion. More help was employed, and it was a season of much stewing and baking and brewing. Hannah and Lissa were happy, but much in a flutter to get ready for so large an assembly.

The guests were bid to the house for the evening and the great ball; but those that could were to remain as much longer as their convenience would let them. Hugh hoped it would be days ere all would depart. He wanted to make it a time of rejoicing and splendor. Hugh is a bit proud, manlike, of his fine Madeira and spirits. He ordered an abundance of lemons and fine sugar: and all in the house was commotion. Even the babies caught the infection, and demanded to know what their robing would be, much to the delight of dear Hugh, who humors and spoils them beyond reason. As for me, when I asked Hugh what my attire should be for the ball, what thinkest thou his reply to me was? 'Wear the dress in which thou wert wed.'

"From the big English chest I had taken my brocades and velvets, and had minded me not of anything so simple. The dress, it was fine and neat, but not at all grand, as I daresay thou rememberest, just a soft, white thing from India. I wanted to please Hugh, and it may have been sin, but I wished for something more rich and more modish. I wished much to wear some of the fine jewels so long put away, not the simple white frock, which was fit for a maid, but not *me*. For I am a matron, and mother of three babies. But, after all, it was dear Hugh that I wished most to please. So I took the white thing and freshed it up a bit, and just coiled my hair enough to be tidy, and stuck a pink rose in it, down near the neck, and when I was robed I came down to Hugh, looking really quite plain and feeling once more like a real Puritan. But he kissed me and took from the casket that belonged to his mother, an elegant necklace of pearls, which he clasped on my neck, and said I looked sweet—*me*, the mother of three babies!

"O, Catherine dear, it would take me weeks to tell thee the splendors of this beautiful time. Torches and lan-

terns were hung in the trees, and everything made gay in the house, with thousands of flowers and sweet smelling shrubs. And the people began to arrive; some in coaches, some in chairs and some on high-stepping chargers. And O, the beautiful frocks in which the ladies were appareled! The brocades, stiff as boards, and the velvets and laces; the powder and patches and cushions and jewels. Thou couldst not believe it without the seeing. They were mostly persons of great dignity. Many officers, and men of great titles; one priest, two bishops, and a rabbi so wise; all gorgeously dressed in their best. For thou must know Hugh standeth high in this country, and the people yearn to him, much on account of his good sense and judgment. This night he looked handsome and fine in his white satin small-clothes and red velvet coat, with his hair powdered and tied in a queue. I really was quite frightened at meeting so many grand folk. But Hugh pressed my hand and said I was the sweetest of all. Dear Hugh!

"It was a time of much eating and drinking and smoking, with music and dancing and playing of games; for Hugh minded him much of the plain folk, and those who for the dance did not care. Swings were under the big trees placed, that there might be entertainment suitable for all.

"Many young gentlemen were bid, and Hugh said I must pay uncommon attention to these and step a dance with each that they might not so much mind their not having ladies of their own. And it was much pleasure to do as he bid me, and O, Catherine! I most felt I was young again. The wild life and the not lacing so tight give one breath for the dance, and, in the pleasures of it, I forgot the rose in my hair and the simple white dress, and felt I was floating away on the air. Fancy *me* forgetting I was the mother of three babies!

"But the last dance of all was most stately and grand, and we formed on the floor in order like this: First, My Lady Fairfax, in purple velvet and lace, honored young Master Adams, of Boston. Next, fair Mary Blaisdell, whose dress was satin, but white like my own, honored Captain Ben Goldthwaite. Then his sister Elizabeth, with eyes like twin stars, honored my own handsome Hugh. And last, but not least, young Master Washington honored me. O, that was a dance to remember! It was so fine that they drew to see us all eyes. And young Master Cheever, the poet, from Boston, who watched it most closely, said 'twas just like a song. It was stately and slow, and the curtsies all so enchantingly low. The forward and back and the pass to the left, the hand-to-hand clasp and the toe-to-toe step were all neatly done. And this ended the ball, for daylight had come.

"I much fear thou art weary; but the end of this letter draweth nigh.

"Many remained over, among whom were the two bishops, Father McCune, Lord and Lady Fairfax, with their two young friends, Master Jefferson and Master Washington (from the Colony of Virginia they came, both likely young men), and young Master Adams, and young Master Cheever, the poet.

"And now, what thinkest thou we occupied ourselves with the last day? I will tell thee. It was this: We planted many little trees to commemorate the great occasion, our guests aiding at the task with many laughs and bright sayings; for the young lads were amazing for wit. It was good and mirthsome to see the young men and girls, who had made such a grand display at the dance, now down on their knees, assisting. Even the bishop and Father McCune took a hand, all helping together.

"This fancy we always shall keep, as 'tis an evergreen

way to remember. And these little trees may, in time, take the place of those now standing, and provide tree-kings and wind-harps for our children and those that come after. Dear Hugh gives a pledge to attach little bronze plates to each tree with the name of the person or event 'tis meant to keep in remembrance. Thinkest thou not, Catherine dear, 'tis a cunning conceit to keep in repair our old woods?

"At last the end of my letter has come, though of the grand time not half of the beauties I've told; nor how the dear babies enjoyed the rejoicing, and chattered, and were kissed, complimented, and petted. Nor have I told thee how handsome and fat and rosy they are. Think, Catherine dear, they never are ill. They know neither syrup nor powder. Indeed, 'tis quite marvelous. Our glorious health is due, I feel sure, to the air that we breathe and the absence of fear. You know that the Good Book saith that fear is torment (and torment must be sickness and suffering); and it also saith that perfect love casteth out fear. Then the reason is clear why we never have pain; for our love is so great and so perfect, there is no room for fear. Couldst thou see the babies and me and dear Hugh, thou wouldst then be convinced; for when all the grand company had said good-bye, and gone, Hugh gathered us close, and kissing us all, said:

"'It's been a gladsome time, love, for thee and the babies and me; and I enjoyed it, and love all my friends. But nothing could take the place of thee and our three babies.'

"With such love thou must know I am happy. May you and dear Charles have as much cause to rejoice.

"With love from us all, and God's benediction, believe me, Your friend,

MABEL.

"P. S.—O, Catherine dear, I forgot most to say that we are to have our portraits drawn—Hugh, the three babies, and me, all in a group, by a lovely great painter in Boston. Master Adams has made for us the arrangements, and we are all to go there for that purpose. Won't it be fine?

"At first it was intended that it should only be myself. But since the ball, Hugh says I was so sprightly, he must have the children and himself drawn, too, to hang in our home to remind me that I am a wife, and the mother of three babies. Hugh is such a quiz!

"MABEL."

Such a man was Hugh Starkweather, a man of unquestionable piety, taste, and culture. But above and beyond all, and most to be prized, was his sound, practical sense, the more to be valued from its uncommon rarity in those days. This fact is more to be gleaned from the letter written by his wife than from anything written by himself.

To this great soul, who, in those early days, could gather beneath his roof in harmonious assemblages, Protestant and Romanist, Jew and Gentile, lord and peasant; whose heart and hand responded in charity to the suffering, what torture it must have been to him to have lived in England during those turbulent times, with the narrow social and religious creeds and prejudices and the utter disregard of personal rights of life and property. What an asylum this land must have been, which, with his luxuriant appreciation of life, became to him a perpetual *Kyrie Eleison.* Here, where Nature with unremitting ardor had given birth to an infinity of life, the soul of this grand man became truly inspired as it wandered from link to link in the great chain of creation, until it became merged into the very essence of the Power Supreme, and

so attuned, that the low-rushing of the wind was a symphony. This silent meditation with Nature, in all her genial and subduing aspects, seems to have imparted to him the gentleness, truth, simplicity, and calmness that ever await upon her teachings. The great solitude, the fierce tempest, Nature in her gladness and smiles, the deep slumber of her woodlands, the twilight hues to this man were most profound, and his reference to them is most touching.

Second only to him in sublimity of soul and appreciation of the beautiful, was his wife Mabel. Her simplicity and purity are so transparent in her letter, that no comment is needed.

How rarely in life do we see such perfect communion of souls; such an affinity of tastes. Ah! those two lives so blended, that could so interpret the language of Nature, that could so love the stars and skies and flowers and forests, who could possess those quickening principles that could bring them in contact, heart to heart, with Nature's throbbings, were endowed with gifts more lovely and of more lasting benefit to themselves and to their descendants than ever would be the most eloquent sermon, or teachings, that could fall from the lips of man.

Christ knew the benefit of the wilderness. He left the multitude, and went into the mountain or desert where He spent hours and days in prayer. In that great silence, in that nearness to the Father, He had time for thought. He became at rest. He became at one with the Infinite.

From this silent communion, He returned to His people, refreshed and strengthened, and sat among them and taught them the divine attributes of Universal Brotherhood.

With their receptive souls, Hugh Starkweather and his wife, living here in this vast solitude, attained that soul-

Trixey put down her watering-pot, and the two stood, for a minute, sobbing like children. Then, Malcolm, dashing away the tears, said disconsolately:

"Well, it's no use. Things have got on their last legs. Only to think! Mabelthorp must go. I can't realize it."

"Neither can I," said Trixey, "and I can't keep the tears from coming when I think about it. But I know Miss Mary would say it's weakness for both of us to be standing here blubbering like two blessed idiots."

"Well, I don't care," replied Malcolm, half savagely. "It's enough to make a mule weep, and I'm nearly as tough as a mule. Just think——"

But what he thought he did not utter; for at this moment there rose on the still air the low sweet voice of a woman singing, outside the house, down further on the lawn. She was concealed from view by the shrubbery. The voice was thrilling and tender. It was only a little, simple air, just such as comes to one, at times, when out in God's sunshine, with the great dome of heaven's blue above; when the heart is full of joy or sorrow, and must have some outlet. Such was the song that now floated to the ears of the two servants, who stood breathlessly listening as if they had never heard the voice before. Then, Malcolm, drawing a long breath, said disparagingly:

"Well, I'll be gol darned! If that ain't Miss Mary singing. She's down in the rose garden. She beats the very deuce. One would think she didn't know that this is the last day in dear old Mabelthorp."

Trixey stood listening for a moment. Then, with a look on her face, as if the very sound of the voice had done her good, she replied:

"Well, *I* couldn't sing. I know that much. And I

could almost be angry with her, if I wasn't sure, that way down in the bottom of her heart, she is as miserable as any of us: and that she's just singing to keep back the tears and to keep up her father's spirits. The poor old general is so down-hearted!"

"Well, I reckon that's true. Still I'll be doggoned if I can see how she can do it. She goes along just as if nothing was the matter."

There was silence for a few minutes. Trixey again had taken her watering-pot and was continuing her work. Malcolm stood leaning against the trunk of a tree, thoughtfully digging his heel into the ground, as if he would dig up some relief to his overcharged feelings. Presently, Trixey came over to where he stood, and holding the watering-pot in both hands, and swinging it carelessly to and fro, in front of her, asked:

"Did you know that master had a friend to see him this morning?"

Malcolm looked at her inquiringly.

"No; who was it?"

"Miss Mary said he was a great big preacher from New York City, and that he and her father used to be boys together. Do you know who he is?"

"Well, you're smart! I should say I do. And you ought to know, too!" exclaimed Malcolm. "It's Dr. Malridge."

"I thought he lived in Brooklyn?"

"Well, ain't Brooklyn in New York City, smarty? And he is the biggest preacher in the whole world. He and Colonel Eversoll and master were boys together at school and college, and afterwards were in the army together. I tell you, I think that they are the three greatest men that ever lived."

And so they were to Malcolm's partial eyes. His mas-

Trixey put down her watering-pot, and the two stood, for a minute, sobbing like children. Then, Malcolm, dashing away the tears, said disconsolately:

"Well, it's no use. Things have got on their last legs. Only to think! Mabelthorp must go. I can't realize it."

"Neither can I," said Trixey, "and I can't keep the tears from coming when I think about it. But I know Miss Mary would say it's weakness for both of us to be standing here blubbering like two blessed idiots."

"Well, I don't care," replied Malcolm, half savagely. "It's enough to make a mule weep, and I'm nearly as tough as a mule. Just think——"

But what he thought he did not utter; for at this moment there rose on the still air the low sweet voice of a woman singing, outside the house, down further on the lawn. She was concealed from view by the shrubbery. The voice was thrilling and tender. It was only a little, simple air, just such as comes to one, at times, when out in God's sunshine, with the great dome of heaven's blue above; when the heart is full of joy or sorrow, and must have some outlet. Such was the song that now floated to the ears of the two servants, who stood breathlessly listening as if they had never heard the voice before. Then, Malcolm, drawing a long breath, said disparagingly:

"Well, I'll be gol darned! If that ain't Miss Mary singing. She's down in the rose garden. She beats the very deuce. One would think she didn't know that this is the last day in dear old Mabelthorp."

Trixey stood listening for a moment. Then, with a look on her face, as if the very sound of the voice had done her good, she replied:

"Well, *I* couldn't sing. I know that much. And I

could almost be angry with her, if I wasn't sure, that way down in the bottom of her heart, she is as miserable as any of us: and that she's just singing to keep back the tears and to keep up her father's spirits. The poor old general is so down-hearted!"

"Well, I reckon that's true. Still I'll be doggoned if I can see how she can do it. She goes along just as if nothing was the matter."

There was silence for a few minutes. Trixey again had taken her watering-pot and was continuing her work. Malcolm stood leaning against the trunk of a tree, thoughtfully digging his heel into the ground, as if he would dig up some relief to his overcharged feelings. Presently, Trixey came over to where he stood, and holding the watering-pot in both hands, and swinging it carelessly to and fro, in front of her, asked:

"Did you know that master had a friend to see him this morning?"

Malcolm looked at her inquiringly.

"No; who was it?"

"Miss Mary said he was a great big preacher from New York City, and that he and her father used to be boys together. Do you know who he is?"

"Well, you're smart! I should say I do. And you ought to know, too!" exclaimed Malcolm. "It's Dr. Malridge."

"I thought he lived in Brooklyn?"

"Well, ain't Brooklyn in New York City, smarty? And he is the biggest preacher in the whole world. He and Colonel Eversoll and master were boys together at school and college, and afterwards were in the army together. I tell you, I think that they are the three greatest men that ever lived."

And so they were to Malcolm's partial eyes. His mas-

ter, to him, was the embodiment of all that was elegant and great; and the two gentlemen just mentioned, ranked next, in his opinion. Suddenly the thought came to him that there might be some significance in this visit at this particular time, and it was with anxiety that he asked the next question:

"I wonder if he knows about master's troubles?"

"I think not," said Trixey, shaking her head. "I heard him say he couldn't but just make a short call, and master looked so relieved. But Miss Mary was just the same as ever, and begged him to stay longer."

The look of hope on Malcolm's face died away. Finally he said: "That girl is a puzzle to me."

"Why?" queried Trixey, setting down her watering-pot.

"Because I just can't, for the life of me, make her out lately," said Malcolm disconsolately. "You remember what a little fiery thing she used to be?"

"Don't I, though," laughed Trixey. "No one knows it better than I."

"I remember, once," went on Malcolm, "when Prince shied and threw her in the grass, she was so angry that she made me bring him to her; and with her own hand she held him by the bit and gave him a complete dressing down. Then she throwed the whip to one side, and said to me: 'There! I guess he will know who is master after this. He will never fling me off again.' And he never did," laughed Malcolm. "My! didn't her eyes flash! and a red spot came in each cheek. I'll never forget how she held him. You wouldn't think those little white hands could do it; but they were strong as steel. How that whip whizzed through the air! I can hear it now. I can remember when she wanted to do a thing, how she would just set her little teeth together and clench those little hands

of hers, and do it. No fooling with her!" And for the moment, both forgot their grief, and laughed merrily at the recollection of some of the mad pranks of their young mistress.

"Yes!" exclaimed Trixey, recovering herself, "that riding whip of hers was worse than a gun. Do you remember the time she struck Sidney Banks in the face with it?"

"Well, rather," said Malcolm. "I don't think it could have been done better." Then with a look of contempt on his face, he added: "But he got just what he deserved. The idea of his thinking she would ever marry him, just because he's got a handsome face, and a lot of money. No matter what happens, a *Starkweather* would never have to stoop to such as he is."

"Well, I should think not," replied Trixey, with a lofty manner, and a sniff in the air.

It would be impossible to describe the tone of the two servants as they spoke of Sidney Banks in connection with their young mistress, the supreme contempt with which they treated his aspirations. No princess could have had more adoring subjects.

"But Miss Mary," said Malcolm, returning to the discussion of his young mistress, "she used to be so fond of fishing. You remember how she used to scream with delight when she got a 'bite,' and frighten all the fish away? And how she used to go out with us to set the traps to catch the birds and rabbits?"

"I guess I do," replied Trixey. "She could beat Master Hugh, shooting. I've seen her pop many a squirrel at twenty paces; and she'd take a hedge with any rider in the country."

"Well, now, you couldn't get her to allow us to trap anything; and as for popping a squirrel or striking Prince

—well, I declare! One day she brought him some sugar, and I heard her saying all kinds of nonsensical and silly things to him. And she put her arms around his neck and rubbed her cheek up against his face, and I actually heard her *tell that horse* she was sorry for the trouncing she gave him. She talked to him just as if he could understand, and to tell the truth, he really acted as if he did. And you'd 'a' died if you'd seen that silly old horse. He stamped his feet and switched his tail and whinnied and pranced, and rubbed his nose on her neck and shoulder, and I swear, he purty near laughed. I believe, in my soul, Miss Mary kissed him. Ah!" said Malcolm, shaking his head, "she's changed very much lately."

"Well, Malcolm," retorted Trixey, tossing her head and speaking with a tinge of indignation in her voice, "anybody hearing you talk, would think Miss Mary had been a cross old thing all her life instead of the sweetest and dearest of little mistresses all her life." Saying which, Trixey took up her watering-pot and started to enter the house. Malcolm followed her up, and detaining her, said:

"Oh, I suppose you can't remember when she used to box your ears?"

"*Don't* I!" laughed Trixey, all her momentary vexation gone, for she well knew that no one loved her young mistress more than Malcolm with his stout Scotch heart. "But I also remember that she was like most other young ladies, and if she did act up awful, sometimes, it was because she was so young and inexperienced. I never saw her do a mean trick in *my* life, and neither did you, and you ought to remember how she came up here wild on this old place. I think she was mighty good. There was no one to tell her she shouldn't do anything. You know her old nurse indulged her in everything. I wonder there was any living with her. You know, after her mother died,

the general and Master Hugh couldn't never see nothing wrong in Miss Mary. They always thought everything she done was awful smart and cute. But you know, with it all, she has always been loving and kind. The only difference I see in her is that she is now a grown woman. You couldn't expect her to act like a child ten years old all her life, could you?"

"No," said Malcolm, heaving a deep sigh. "All you say is true enough, and yet, I claim she has changed more than just growing up into a woman. Ever since she returned from Boston, last year, she's been different."

"Well, what is it?" asked Trixey.

"I can't hardly tell myself," said Malcolm, now speaking in a lower voice; "but sometimes I've almost thought she was losing her head. One day she came down into the garden, and she went among the plants and vegetables, and she handled them 'most as if she thought they were alive; and when I was going to kill a great big tomato-worm, she said: 'Oh, don't kill it! Let's put it up here on this fence, and tell it to go away and feed on something else.' And she broke off the leaf, and put it on the fence, and said: 'There! little worm, *we* want the tomatoes. You must find something else for *your* lunch.' Then she laughed, as the worm raised himself up, and struck out his head and tried to wiggle his horns. And she said: 'Poor little thing, you have a right to live! We won't kill you.' And directly, he settled himself back on the leaf, and she left him. Then she said: 'It seems cruel to kill anything. I don't think we have a right to do it.' Some birds flew away as we came up where they were, and she said: 'Now look at those birds. How afraid they are of us. We ought to live so that every bird and animal would come to us when we call them. If we were not so cruel they would do so. I hope, Malcolm, you won't kill anything you're

not obliged to. There are countries where they don't kill anything, not even a worm. Now, if other people can get along without killing things, we ought to be able to do it.'

"After she had gone to the house, I went back to kill that tomato-worm. But he was gone. I knew he wasn't far away, and I began looking for him, and at last I found him. Where do you think he was?" asked Malcolm; and without waiting for a reply, he went on: "He was climbing up a mullein-stalk. Now who ever heard of a tomato-worm on a mullein-stalk? I raised the stick to knock him off, and he raised his head and stuck out his horns at me, and wiggled, and to save my life, I couldn't kill him. I remembered what she said when she told him to find a lunch some place else. So I just shook my fist at him, and told him if I caught him on the tomato-vines again, he was a goner. Then I went off and left him; and, I tell you, I think it's real craziness. Heaven is the only country where they don't kill things. But the worst of it is, she makes you silly by such talk. I can't kill the things I ought to since that. Even when I see a worm on the vegetables, I find myself saying: 'Oh, well, you can't eat very much. I guess there'll be enough left for us.' Of course I don't say it right slap out; but I say it inside of me. I can't pick up a stone and fling it at the birds and chickens like I used to. I keep hearing her say, 'How cruel!' Now, all this makes a man a darned fool. It's bad enough for *her* to be like that; but *I* don't want to catch it."

Trixey laughed and said: "What an old goose you are, Malcolm. You know you're a regular softy, yourself, and you would lay all the blame on Miss Mary." Trixey looked off in the direction of the singer who was evidently drawing nearer, and then in a voice that was full of anxiety

and trouble, said inquiringly: "What in the world are they going to do now?"

"The good Lord only knows," replied Malcolm, despairingly, as they stood watching the singer as she emerged from the shrubbery.

The young girl, softly singing, who now came into view on the broad driveway, was tall, lithe and willowy. She was dressed in some soft, clinging, white material. On her left arm she carried a mass of gorgeous roses and other blossoms. Her right hand grasped her skirts, lifting them from two perfectly formed feet shod in dainty slippers. She was the embodiment of grace as she moved up the drive. Her step was firm, in it there was neither haste nor languor. Her hair, which was loosely caught up and coiled on her neck, was that rare and peculiar shade of brown that takes on different tints from the varied lights that fall upon it—sometimes gold, sometimes copper, and again, almost black. A large wide-brimmed, leghorn hat, from which clover-blossoms drooped, shaded her face, that, with its ever-changing color and great, soulful, blue eyes, shone like an opal. Sweet as the murmuring of a brook, the little tune fell on the air as she neared the spot where the two servants awaited her. Looking up and beholding them, her face lit up, and with a radiant smile that parted her lips, disclosing teeth even and white as pearls, and in a voice that was low, sweet, and musical as the tinkle of bells, she exclaimed banteringly:

"Ah, Malcolm, is that you and Trixey loitering here? Don't you think you are both a bit idle this morning?"

"Oh, Miss Mary!" exclaimed Malcolm disconsolately, with tears welling up in his great, honest, brown eyes, "I haven't the heart for work this morning."

"Neither have I," said Trixey, again calling into use the corner of her apron.

"Oh, come, come, come!" replied Mary in a cheery voice, "this will never do. Suppose that papa and I were to sit down, and mope and cry. Do you think it would do any good? Would it pay the mortgage on this dear old home? or make it any brighter? What dreadful recollections I would have of my last day in the dear old place. See! I have been gathering flowers, as usual, this morning. Aren't they beautiful?" she exclaimed, holding them up. Then, going to a rustic table, she threw them down and said: "Trixey, bring the vases here, and help me arrange them."

"Yes, Miss Mary," said Trixey, apparently inspired by the voice of her mistress, as she hurried into the house for the desired articles.

Mary then turned to Malcolm, who was trying to wink the tears out of his eyes, evidently being ashamed of his weakness, and said in a firm, yet kind and considerate voice, a voice that did not have to command to be obeyed:

"Go now, Malcolm, and attend to your work, and see that you do it better than usual."

"I'll do it, Miss Mary," said Malcolm with forced cheerfulness in his tones. "I know it's the last day; but I'll shed no more tears, and I'll do everything just as you would have it done." And in a second he was out of sight, around the corner of the house.

"Poor dear Malcolm and Trixey!" mused Mary. "What faithful followers. God knows I feel my trouble as much on their account as on my own. They, as well as I, have known no other home than this."

"Here are the vases, Miss Mary," said Trixey, coming from the house and placing them on the table by which Mary was standing.

"There, Trixey, see how fresh and lovely they are," said Mary, putting the blossoms in the vase, with loving hands. Then, placing her hand under a large rose that drooped heavily to one side, she said in a playful tone: "There! hold up your head, dearie."

"You talk to the flowers as if you thought they understood you," said Trixey.

"Perhaps they do," replied Mary. Then, holding up a handful of pansies with long stems, and gazing at them lovingly, she said, with much feeling: "See these lovely Puritan pansies. It seems to me that they look at me, this morning, with more than usual meaning in their eyes. And these glorious roses!" she exclaimed, burying her face among the delicious blossoms that were exhaling a fragrance rich and warm as the soul of a woman. "I know their perfume is more sweet to me than ever before. There! take them in, Trixey, and see that the entire house is put in perfect order."

"Yes, Miss Mary," cheerfully replied Trixey, going toward the house with the flowers. "I'll do everything just as you say."

Mary picked up her hat that she had thrown aside, and was about to follow Trixey, when, casting her eyes down the driveway, she saw a woman rapidly approaching. She carried a little babe in her arms, and apparently was excited, and glanced nervously about her. As she neared the house, Mary recognized her as a woman who had been living in the neighborhood for a short time, and one whom she had befriended. She went forward to meet her, offering her hand in greeting, and said in a welcoming tone of voice:

"Ah, good morning, Mrs. Multon, I am glad to see you."

But the hand she took was cold and trembling. There

was no reply. She seemed quite overcome by the cordial hand-clasp and evident tenderness of this charming girl. She was dressed in black, and she was a pathetic figure as she stood there. Her lips were set, unable to utter a word. Her great mournful, eyes were tearless, and, as she hugged the little mortal of humanity to her breast, she swayed and trembled like a willow in a blast. Mary, seeing her agitation, said in a voice that thrilled this friendless woman with its tender sympathy and solicitude:

"Why, what is the matter? You are nervous, trembling. What *is* it? Come and sit down." And putting her arm about the woman's waist, she led her to a rustic seat, and placing her in it, took the babe that was sleeping, and gently laid it in a hammock, swung in the shade of a large tree. Then returning to Mrs. Multon, she sat down beside her, and, for a moment, there was silence. Then, with a low cry, Mrs. Multon covered her face with her hands and sobbed as if her heart would break. It seemed, in this paroxysm, as if the tension had been so strained, the heart so stricken that it must snap asunder.

Mary wisely was silent, only pressing the little, limp hand in sympathy. Finally, after an heroic effort, Mrs. Multon controlled herself sufficiently to say, between her sobs:

"Oh, Miss Starkweather, I am in such trouble!"

"There, there, be calm," said Mary soothingly. "Tell me. Perhaps I can aid you."

"Oh, Miss Starkweather! I—I had no place to go. They are going to tear down the cottage where I have been living."

"Tear down the cottage!" Mary exclaimed in a surprised voice.

"Yes. Mr. Banks has been to see about it several times of late. This morning, he came and said that they would

begin to-day. The lady with whom I have been staying went to a friend, but I—I——" Again the little woman was shaken with sobs.

"But you—*you* had no place to go, so you came to me," said Mary in a gentle voice, and with a reassuring pressure of the hand.

"Oh, Miss Starkweather, you have been so kind," said the woman. "Yes, I came to you, but only for a day, really. I will find something to do soon, I know. Mr. Banks offered me a place in his home with his mother. But I—Oh, Miss Starkweather, I know I should not have come here to annoy you. Mr. Banks told me of your financial trouble, and that you could not take me in. But—but it's only for a day, and—and—I could not accept the —the position he offered to me, because you see—that is—I—Oh, you don't understand!" and again she gave way to her grief.

During this disjointed, hesitating recital, Mary sat quietly listening. Suddenly a look of intelligence swept over her face, and her color deepened; and when the voice ceased, and the little head again was bowed with its weight of trouble, there was a look of righteous indignation in Mary's eyes that was good to see. The fine scorn that curled her lip and dilated her sensitive nostrils, seemed to pervade every fibre of her being as she rose with flashing eyes, and stood perfectly erect for a brief moment before replying. Then, bending over, she laid her white hand on the bowed head with its wealth of black, shining hair, and gently stroking it, she said with tenderest sympathy:

"Yes, I *do* understand. I think I know Sidney Banks, and you have done right to come to me."

"How good you are!" said Mrs. Multon, lifting her tear-stained face. "I know I have no claim upon you, but——"

"I still have a home," replied Mary, "and you are welcome." Then, seeing the baby stir, she took it up, and leading the way into the house, called Trixey to her, and laying the babe in her arms said brightly: "I have brought you a pet, Trixey."

"Oh, the dear little thing!" exclaimed the bewildered and astonished Trixey, as she cuddled the little one in her arms.

"Trixey, this is Mrs. Multon, my guest. Carry the baby, and show her to the room next to mine, and make her comfortable."

"Yes, Miss Mary," said the obedient Trixey.

Mrs. Multon clasped Mary's hand, and with quivering lips murmured: "God bless you!" then turned and followed Trixey through the wide hall, up the broad stairway, to a room whose atmosphere was redolent with all the sweet odors of summer from the flowers and shrubs without.

As Mrs. Multon left the room, Mary heard the voice of her father from the library opposite, speaking to his guest, who evidently was about to take his leave. Her father was saying:

"We old comrades see each other so seldom that I am sorry to let you go so soon. But even this brief call is appreciated."

"I regret I cannot remain longer, but important business calls me back to the city. I don't get here often, and I still have several calls to make in this neighborhood, and I would like to catch the next train," said Dr. Malridge, drawing out his watch and consulting it. "I looked in upon Colonel Eversoll, on my way from the station," laughingly continued the doctor, "just exchanged a few shots with him, and came on here;" for these old

cronies never could meet without sparring, and each found in the other a foe worthy of his steel.

"You found him the same bright, happy-go-lucky fellow as of old, did you not?" laughed General Starkweather, who was the eldest of the triumvirate. He was very fond of these old friends, and their battle of words was always much enjoyed by him.

"Yes, just the same old scoffer, atheistic as ever, perfectly incorrigible, and inconsistent," sighed the doctor, shaking his head. "But, by the way," changing the subject, "I also ran into Sidney Banks as I came along. What a handsome fellow he has grown to be! He is a great improvement on the old man, his father, is he not?"

"In appearance and education, yes," replied the general; "but otherwise, he is a chip of the old block. Money, money, money! It is the only God he knows. It is the only thing he worships. He is trying very hard, through its influence, to push himself to the front socially and politically; and in certain quarters it has had its effect. His father, as you know, left him rich. He has multiplied his fortune rapidly. I fear that in many things he is even more unscrupulous than his father;" and General Starkweather sighed wearily.

"I am sorry to hear this. I had hoped that through better advantages and happier environment, a nobler man than his father had been evolved," said Dr. Malridge, again looking at his watch. "But I must be off. I must say good-by to Miss Mary. Where is she?"

"Here I am," said Mary, coming forward. "Not going so soon, Dr. Malridge?"

"Sorry, but I must tear myself away, else I shall not be able to see the rest of my friends. So, I must say good-by, my dear," replied the doctor, taking her by the hand.

"Good-by! don't forget us," said Mary.

"I could as soon forget the sun," chivalrously protested the doctor, again pressing her hand.

"As gallant as ever, I see," laughed Mary, as Dr. Malridge linked his arm in the general's, and the two veterans sauntered down to where a man in an open buggy was waiting for the doctor.

Mary stood and watched them with loving eyes—these two men so fond of each other. Then she sighed a little wearily, as she turned and entered the house.

CHAPTER III.

THE REPULSE OF SIDNEY BANKS.

No one had ever known a Starkweather to want for anything. They had the name of being lucky—"lucky dogs, those Starkweathers," was a common expression; and nothing would have more astonished General Starkweather's friends than to have learned that he was in need of financial assistance. And Sidney Banks, with his handsome, smiling face, was the devil that had entered this Eden.

Sidney's father had been a tailor in Clinton. He was English, but born in America. He had spent some years of his early life in Louisiana; and had married there, coming to Clinton afterwards, where he took up his permanent residence. His wife was Spanish, of the ordinary class; but she was ravishingly beautiful, and possessed all the coquetry and witchery of her race. She was inordinately vain, wicked, and frivolous; and both she and her husband were ambitious and unscrupulous.

During the War of the Rebellion, Sidney's father had sought and obtained large contracts for supplying clothing for the army, filling the orders with the worst goods on the market, and coining large sums of money at the

expense of the government. In this way he lay the foundation to an extensive fortune. When the war was over, he built an elegant mansion, installed his beautiful wife therein, set up his carriage, and made an effort to launch himself and family into fashionable society. He forgot entirely that he ever had sat cross-legged on his table; and the word, *shop,* was stricken from his vocabulary. His great ambition was for Sidney—to educate him for a profession and to keep him out of trade. Sidney far exceeded his father's anticipations. The boy had inherited all his mother's marvelous beauty. He was strikingly handsome, bright, shrewd, and cunning. As he grew to manhood, he developed all the unscrupulousness of his father. He was wicked, ambitious, revengeful, and vindictive—all of which he managed to hide from the casual observer by his handsome exterior, his smooth, polished manner, and his undoubtedly great hypnotic power. He had studied for and had been admitted to the bar; but his aim was for social and political power. He determined to have them at any cost. Money would procure both, he thought, and even though young, his operations on Wall Street had been known to yield many times over his investments. There seemed to be no limit to his ambition. He was physically strong. He cared for nothing that came easily. If a thing appeared difficult to obtain, he never rested until he possessed it. He loved to conquer, to feel that he was master. His horses were the hardest to manage, his dogs savage and vicious. He loved to see them quail at his approach.

To marry advantageously, would be, he knew, one of the greatest stepping-stones to his ambition socially, and he early determined to make Mary Starkweather his wife. Every exclusive door flew open to welcome a Starkweather. The prestige of the family was unquestioned on both sides

of the Atlantic. As servants to their country, there had been too many soldiers, statesmen, and diplomats by the name of Starkweather, not to find quick response at sound of it. Sidney Banks had heard all his life of the many deeds of heroism and devotion to their country of the descendants of this old house. He appreciated the immense advantage, socially, an alliance with Mary would be to him, and he determined to leave no stone unturned to accomplish it. With this end in view, he courted young Hugh in every way possible, and took every means possible to ingratiate himself into the good opinion of General Starkweather and Mary.

General Starkweather had two living children, Hugh and Mary. Hugh was six years older than his sister. He was a bright, honest, manly fellow, trusting and confiding. Living in the same place and being nearly the same age, Hugh and Sidney had grown up together. The boys attended different schools, but they were much together during their vacations at Clinton. As years passed, and they grew to manhood, it would have been plain for a keen observer, and for one who understood such things, to see that Sidney Banks possessed a peculiar power over young Hugh Starkweather. Sidney hated Hugh with a hate that almost exceeded understanding. It was born of jealousy and envy. There was no human being on earth whom Sidney so envied.

Once, when some of Hugh's college-friends had been spending a week of their vacation at Mabelthorp, and Hugh had been showing them about the house and grounds, pointing out objects and spots of historical interest, which drew forth from these young students of history, expressions of keenest delight and admiration, Sidney stole away by himself, and clenching his hands until the nails cut deep into the flesh, he actually shed tears of rage and hate. He

felt he could have killed his father and mother for being of humble origin. He knew all the value of money, for in these days of multi-millionaires, the Starkweathers' fortune, though ample, was, comparatively speaking, small. Sidney lived in a handsome and modern home, packed with the richest furniture. Money was rolling in, and he was heir to it all. Yet, he so loved admiration, desired so much to lead in everything, hungered so for homage, that he would have given all he possessed and would have sold his soul to the devil, if his Satanic Majesty could have put him in Hugh Starkweather's place. He well knew that all the money he might ever accumulate, could never buy what Hugh possessed. Had it been in his power, he would have swept Mabelthorp from the face of the earth.

In making up his mind to marry Mary, Sidney knew he was playing for high stakes. But he was inordinately vain and conceited, and while he knew his fortune would not aid him in the favor of Mary, he had the fullest confidence in his personal attractions. For this handsome Sidney was fascinating, seductive, and accomplished. Too many languishing eyes were turned in his direction for him to be unaware of his power, and had he so desired, without doubt he could have married not only beauty, but position. But while he laughed and toyed with many, he thought only of Mary in the light of marriage.

When Sidney was twenty-five, he concluded to wait no longer, but to press his suit with the utmost possible speed, as Mary was now eighteen, and every day enhanced her beauty. With most jealous eyes, he watched the many who approached her, but, as yet, he never had been able to discover that she showed the slightest preference for any one of the many who sought her society. Mary was high-minded and naturally imperious. She was full of happy,

buoyant life. She had lived much out of doors, sharing in many of her brother's sports and exercises. She could ride, swim, and shoot. She was a perfect vision of dawning, electric, glowing, budding womanhood. She was kind by nature, but there was that natural woman's intuition in her that made her almost distrust, at times, the dark, handsome face of her brother's friend. But for Hugh's sake, she always had been kind to Sidney. Of late, however, he had been attentive to her in a way that was far from agreeable, and she had determined to see him as little as possible.

It was in the early summer, and there was to be a picnic in the neighborhood. Sidney, knowing that Mary and Hugh would be there, had written a letter to Mary, in which he poured out his love in the most eloquent and impassioned manner, and besought her to become his wife. He announced his intention of going to the picnic, where he hoped to meet her, and to receive her answer. This letter he sent by mail, and, as luck would have it, Mary did not receive it before going. She and Hugh had ridden over on horseback, and, late in the afternoon, Mary was sauntering about the grounds, in her riding-habit, whip in hand. Ere she was aware of it, she found herself some little distance from the others, and concealed from them by a clump of alder-trees. It was a lovely cool spot, and seating herself on a log, she was soon lost in a dreamy reverie, and was listlessly switching the grass with her riding-whip.

Sidney had watched her closely all the afternoon. She had given no unusual sign of recognition, but once, when he offered her some slight courtesy, he fancied her cheeks took on a deeper hue. At last, when he saw her withdraw from the others, his heart gave a great bound of joy; for in his egotism, he believed she was doing this to

give him an opportunity to follow her. He watched the tall, graceful figure until it disappeared from view. He was exultant. The victory had been easier than he had anticipated. From the moment he saw her retreating figure, he never doubted but that the result would be all he could desire, and feeling so perfectly sanguine of his success, he took his own time in joining her. He had the look of a conquering hero, as he approached her with nonchalant impudence.

"All alone, Miss Starkweather?"

Glancing up, she looked straight into the eyes of Sidney. What was it in the burning, exultant gaze of those dark eyes that caused her to tremble? There was an insolence, an assurance in his look, and there was a familiarity in his tone and attitude, as he leaned toward her, that sent the hot blood to her face in a flood of indignation. She started to rise. A mad impulse seized him. Mistaking her increasing color for embarrassment, he sprang forward, making an attempt to clasp her in his arms and to place a kiss upon her cheek.

Wrenching herself from his grasp, and springing back like a young panther, Mary sent her whip singing through the air, with the strength of a young Amazon. The next instant it descended, cutting him across the cheek that quickly turned to dark purple.

It was so unexpected, so unlooked for, that he lost all control of himself, and his face was dreadful to see, for it was white with rage, save for the purple welt. Fierce with passion, he exclaimed, as he pressed his hand to his burning cheek:

"You shall repent this!"

"It is not in *your* power to make me repent it!" replied Mary in a scornful tone. She was deadly pale and trembling with rage. Never in her life had she been so

royally beautiful as at that moment, standing there with flashing eyes and curling lip.

Sidney always had been received most kindly at Mabelthorp. Never before had he been made to feel the immeasurable distance between them. But her tone said as plain as words: "It is not possible for one in *your* position to reach up to mine and injure me." The words and tone stung him like a scorpion. Yet, strange as it may seem, he had never loved Mary until that moment, though it was the love of the vulture for the dove. He would have given worlds to clasp her in his arms and crush her into submission, and, as she gathered her skirts in her hand, and swept from his presence with a defiant, scornful air, he was choked with rage. From that moment he was her enemy, and swore by the God that made him to be revenged.

Hugh was both astonished and angry, when he learned of the affair from his sister, and could not account for Sidney's daring to take such a liberty. But when they reached home, and Mary found the letter, in a measure it explained the presumption. Mary went at once to her father, and telling him all, gave him the letter, asking him to answer it.

General Starkweather wrote to Sidney, telling him that his daughter did not receive his letter until after her return from the picnic, and therefore, in her ignorance of the state of his feelings, she had not been able to account for his conduct; and this must be her excuse for her extreme resentment. He also expressed his regret at the occurrence; but, in a few words and as kindly as possible, he let Sidney understand that there was no hope for him and that there was no more to be said on the subject.

Sidney read this letter twice, and although it was couched

in the kindest and most considerate terms, he ground his teeth in rage, for he read in it the doom to the hopes he had cherished for years. If he had envied and hated the Starkweathers before this, those sentiments were doubly intensified now. He tossed his arms wildly, in impotent rage; and, as he paced the floor, he clenched his hands with the ferocity of a fiend, and registered an oath that Mary should yet become his wife, or he would spend his life in crushing the Starkweathers, one and all. He then and there concluded to swallow his wrath and bide his time.

Hugh was now twenty-four years old, but he was more like a boy of eighteen, frank and honest, distrusting no one. Hugh worshipped his sister. Sidney never had hinted his attachment for Mary to Hugh. If he had, or if Hugh had thought that there was the slightest possibility of his sister's favoring Sidney, he would have opposed it most earnestly. Yet, had he been asked his reason for feeling thus, he could not have given one.

It was several days after this that Hugh met Sidney, and between the two, the affai was never mentioned.

The following October, General Starkweather went abroad, taking his daughter with him. They intended remaining two years, and expected Hugh to join them in the course of a few months.

Hugh delayed his going from month to month, until a year had slipped away. Mary and her father were in Paris, on their way to Italy for the winter. They were waiting, hoping to have letters from Hugh telling them when to expect him. For days, General Starkweather had had a nervous, restless feeling in regard to his son. He could not account for it, nor could he put it away from him. He felt an unaccountable drawing toward home, and had it not been that he feared to disappoint his daughter, by cutting short their trip, he would have proposed

their immediate return to America. What then, was his surprise, on meeting his daughter, in the morning, after passing a sleepless night, to have her say to him:

"Papa, dear, would you mind very much if we returned home instead of going to Italy?"

"Why do you ask that?" eagerly questioned her father.

"Because, for days I have felt that there was something the matter with brother Hugh, and last night, I don't know whether I was asleep or not, but I fancied I heard him calling us both. And, oh, papa dear, if you don't mind, I would so much rather go home at once."

"We will certainly go," replied her father as he hurried to the office to see if they would have time to reach the next steamer, which was to sail the following morning. Finding they could do so, he telegraphed for accommodations, and at the same time sent a cablegram to Hugh that they were just starting for home.

When they reached New York, seven days later, they found their worst fears realized. Hugh was in the hospital, dangerously ill with brain fever, and five days after, he passed away. During that time he had but one lucid interval, and that occurred the day before the end came. It only lasted for a little while, but long enough for him to realize that his father and sister were at his bedside, and for him to make an effort to tell his father something pertaining to his business. But before he could do so, he lapsed into unconsciousness from which he did not again awaken.

After Hugh had been laid to rest beside his mother, at Mabelthorp, and before General Starkweather had time to recover from the frightful shock of losing his only son, Hugh's body-servant, James, gave him a letter that Hugh had written, he said, the day after he was taken sick, and which he had made James promise not to give to the gen-

eral unless he should die. It would seem that Hugh had a premonition that he would not recover, and with this thought in his mind, he made a full statement of his business affairs.

What was General Starkweather's horror to learn that Hugh had been speculating on Wall Street, and had become involved to the extent of many thousand dollars more than he was able to pay. It was worrying over this, no doubt, that had brought about the illness that had ended his life.

General Starkweather was no financier nor business man; and he sat for some time, after reading the letter, almost stunned. The amount mentioned exceeded, by nearly fifty thousand dollars what he was able to meet. Finally, he arose with a determined air. Two things must be done: First, all this must be kept from Mary, who was prostrated from the loss of this dearly loved brother. Second, his son's good name must be saved at any cost; and the only way to do it was to mortgage Mabelthorp.

He immediately went to Clinton, and negotiated a loan through Isaac Solmon, a broker. In a week's time every claim against Hugh Starkweather had been paid.

Long, weary weeks of sorrow followed, which ever afterward seemed like a troubled dream to both Mary and her father. The shock had been so sudden, so great. Each tried to comfort and cheer the other, but both were pale and showed their suffering. It was the first time that Mabelthorp had been without a male heir. Mary realized what a blow this must be to her father. Everything at Mabelthorp recalled Hugh, and accentuated their suffering. Mary felt that if she could persuade her father to go away for a time, it would do him good. The general also had been anxious on his daughter's account, as daily she seemed

growing paler and thinner. So, when Mary proposed a change, he was only too glad to acquiesce.

They went to Philadelphia, and on to Washington; then to Baltimore, lingering in each city only for a short time. Still, Mary did not improve, and the general felt she was making a tremendous effort on his account. A sickening dread came over him, gripping his heart as if in a vise. What if this loved daughter should fade away and die? The thought was maddening, and he now became thoroughly aroused on her account. He suggested their going to Boston, as there, he had an old and valued friend, who was one of the most eminent physicians in America, and he desired to consult him in regard to his daughter. But when they reached Boston, and he proposed it to Mary, she would not hear of it, declaring she was perfectly well. Learning of an eminent Italian singer, who was teaching in Boston, Mary proposed that they should remain for a time that she might avail herself of his instruction; to which her father agreed. Each dreaded for the other the return to Mabelthorp. Each thought only of the other.

Weeks passed, and although Mary made every effort to be cheerful, her father could see that she was growing weaker every day. He could see that she took no interest in her music, and readily conjectured it had been only an excuse to prolong their stay from Mabelthorp. He now became genuinely alarmed, and began to feel, in spite of his daughter's objections, he must call in a physician; when suddenly, without any apparent cause, she began to change for the better. Her step became firmer, her color gradually came back, and her sweet face was once more wreathed in smiles. Her father was overjoyed at her returning health, and he, too, began to regain his wonted color and vigor, and in the spring, when they returned to

Mabelthorp, both had, in a great measure, become their strong, helpful, healthful selves.

The summer slipped away, and winter came and went, and spring had come again. Mary was wonderfully gay and happy. When the buds began to open, the house had been turned topsy-turvy. Such a house-cleaning! There had been so much painting and varnishing and renovating that the old manor-house shone, inside and out, like a mirror.

Some one in New York had written to the general, asking the privilege of taking views and of writing an historical sketch of Mabelthorp. Two men came there for that purpose, and Mary had been much interested, assisting them, suggesting notable and historical objects and places, and giving bits of information regarding each; for she truly loved Mabelthorp, and gloried in its history. Many views were taken, both inside and outside the house. To Mary the most precious of all, was a splendid snap-shot of her father, standing in the picture-gallery before her mother's portrait. This was the best photograph taken, and the general was quite unaware that he had been "shot," as Mary laughingly termed it.

CHAPTER IV.

SIDNEY PLANS TO RUIN THE STARKWEATHERS.

SIDNEY BANKS had never lost sight of his revenge. He had not seen Mary, to speak to her, since the day of that memorable picnic, until long after her return to America. When General Starkweather had taken his daughter and had gone to Europe, where Sidney knew she would find hundreds of admirers, where her father's name would be sufficient passport to the "inner circles," his jealousy knew no bounds, and he felt that Mary had escaped him. But if he could humble her by disgracing her—could drag the name of Starkweather through the mire—it would be some compensation. Every step higher that he had climbed up the social ladder, he owed to Hugh, and he hated him for it.

After the general and Mary were gone, Sidney saw Hugh more than ever. It was he that had led Hugh into his wild speculations. He had sworn to ruin him, body and soul. But death had mercifully stepped in and robbed him of his victim before he had much more than begun the schemes he had carefully laid, and that he intended should be a process of slow torture. Therefore, Hugh's death was an awful blow to Sidney. He knew his power

over Hugh, and he had intended to lead him through every phase of debauchery possible. To do this, he felt he must entangle him financially. Sidney knew Hugh's pride; and he thought if he could get him in a corner, where, in order to save himself, he could induce him to commit forgery, and thus get him into prison, eventually, he would then have, at least, one big installment of his revenge. His cunning was satanic. He flattered himself he knew Hugh Starkweather; but he did not. Hugh was confiding and trusting, and through Sidney's persuasion and acting under his instruction, he had made some small ventures. At first he had been wonderfully successful; but before he was aware of it, he had become deeply involved through larger speculations. To Hugh, who was unacquainted with business and had never owed a dollar he could not pay, the situation was appalling. When he realized his misfortune and that he was not only compromising himself, but also his father and sister, he turned to Sidney for advice. And that friend, instead of assisting him out of his difficulties, laughed at him for being timid, and suggested that he have a little more nerve, and plunge in more deeply and retrieve what he had lost.

Nature had not designed Hugh to be a votary to evil. When conscience was aroused it was true to her charge. Habitual vice would have been impossible to him; and when Sidney hinted at ways and means of obtaining more money, Hugh became thoroughly convinced that there was something wrong. He had always been surrounded by the atmosphere that envelops real goodness; and although remorse preyed upon him, he would not drown it by indulgences nor recklessness.

Hugh kept away from Sidney, who felt so sure his victim would soon look him up, that he was not at all troubled about his absence. However, as days went by,

and Hugh did not appear, he began to be uneasy. Taking up a paper, one morning, what was his surprise to see the faces of General Starkweather and his daughter, and to read that they had returned from Europe to find Hugh dangerously ill in the hospital. A few days afterward, he saw the announcement of Hugh's passing away without regaining consciousness.

Did Sidney have any remorse for his share in causing Hugh's death? Not a bit of it. His only regret was that Hugh had escaped him, and that he had not been able to get him still more involved than he really was. He wrote a letter of condolence to the general and attended the funeral.

Hugh, with his frank, confiding nature, often had talked freely of his father's affairs. In this way, Sidney knew that the general could not meet Hugh's obligations. Thus, it was with great satisfaction that he awaited the *denouement,* which, to his surprise, did not come. He watched the papers carefully, expecting to see something about the demands of Hugh's creditors. He then began to inquire around, and learned, to his astonishment, that already the general had paid to the last dollar, and without question, every claim against his son. Again was Sidney thwarted. "Where had the money come from?" was the next question. Sidney hurried to Clinton, and quietly made inquiries. He soon learned of the mortgage and who held it. Now, the next thing was to control Solmon, the broker.

Sidney was one of the principal stockholders, as well as a director, in the National Bank of Clinton, where Isaac Solmon did his banking. He knew much of the broker's affairs. He was enormously rich, but he was very avaricious and could not bear to lose a penny. He had quite a good deal of "paper" out, which Sidney made it a point

to buy up and hold in his own hands; for, be it known, Sidney's fortune in the past few years, had rolled up into the millions. So adroit had been his manipulations that the financial crisis had left him unscathed. In fact, he had managed to make money out of it.

From the time the general returned from Boston, Sidney kept himself informed of all his movements. He also avoided meeting him. He came upon him unexpectedly, one day, and was pleasantly greeted by the general, who could not hold unkind feelings toward any one, much less toward a young fellow, like Sidney, who, as a boy, had played with his children. He had no fondness for Sidney, and he could appreciate his daughter's feelings in regard to him. Nevertheless, as Sidney now seemed tc be much in Clinton, and as Mary would be compelled to meet him often, he advised his daughter to treat him kindly and ignore the past.

Mary was as proud as ever. But of late there was a great change in her, an inexpressible tenderness and gentleness. She seemed to be constantly reaching out to aid, strengthen, and comfort others. She always had been a delight to her father. Now, she was a full-grown woman, and a solace and a joy to him.

When Mary's father spoke to her about Sidney, she gracefully acquiesced. She did not like him; but all anger had died out in her heart.

Soon after the conversation with her father in regard to Sidney, she met him at a reception in Clinton. Sidney watched her from afar. She had all the ease and *savoir faire* that come to those familiar with the best society. When she entered the room, all eyes turned to her. Her great beauty was positively enthralling. Mary had not seen Sidney, and turning suddenly, she met him face to face. He did not know whether to advance or to re-

treat. But she held out her hand and smiled sweetly. He took it in his own. What was it in this man's touch that sent the hot blood surging to this sensitive girl's face, and then, left her deadly pale and her heart throbbing so that she could hardly stand?

Sidney felt her hand tremble in his, noticed also the changing color of this proud, self-possessed girl, and as Mary passed on, he tried to solve the problem. And Mary wondered at herself. She only knew that when she touched his hand she was chilled. Her intuitive nature shrank from him, she knew not why.

Mary had been brought up in the midst of high, honorable and correct associations. Low, mean and vicious selfishness she did not understand. How, then, could she judge this man? She could not. She only knew that even to touch his hand was repulsive to her. She reproached herself for the feeling, and tried to excuse Sidney. She knew he had been brought up in a blighting atmosphere. His love of gain was inordinate. Power, social and otherwise, were his aims. Some of these evil attributes might have been eradicated by proper training; but, instead, they had been fostered and encouraged by both his father and mother, who, she had heard people say, would fairly turn sick with envy of the very people they hated.

Mary truly felt sorry for him, and she made a vow, then and there, that she would overcome this prejudice.

Ah, if she could have seen his warped, deformed moral nature under his smiling exterior, and had she known that he was a most perfect actor, that he knew no pity, that his heart was ice, his nerves steel, that he feared neither God, man, nor devil.

And what interpretation did Sidney put upon her emotion? He was a conceited coxcomb. At once his inor-

dinate vanity took possession of him. He was aware that he had gained and not lost in good looks since they last met. His father had died since then, and he was now ranked with the millionaires. He thought of her father's friendly greeting a few days previous. Perhaps, after all, the affair of three years ago was merely the caprice of a girl. She was certainly changed since then, and she was very much affected when he took her hand in his. The very fact that he could make her tremble, gave him joy. Could it be that there was still hope for him? The thought was intoxicating. He knew she had crowds of admirers, but he heard that she gave encouragement to none. He listened, for she was now singing. The guests stood spellbound, as her glorious voice, full, clear and sweet, filled the room with a perfect shower of melody.

The storm of applause that greeted her as they urged her again and again to sing, attested their appreciation. She had a voice of rare sweetness and power. Even on t`e professional stage, it would have been difficult to have found her superior.

Sidney watched her, watched how these people seemed to adore her as if she were a queen. She was at home here, but he knew it was the same wherever she went, that the proud, fashionable dames of Gotham, one and all, knew Mary, and that their doors were open to her at all times. She was accomplished, and had beauty, and an intellect that had been enhanced by all the advantages of life. Her friends felt grateful, it was a benefit received when they could lure her from Mabelthorp for a visit. What wonder that Sidney was ready to do and dare that he might possess this woman and call her his wife, and aristocratic, historical Mabelthorp, "our home." His insufferable vanity made him hopeful. He had so often seen women flush and tremble and turn pale at his

approach. Therefore, this handsome, fascinating libertine could put but one construction on Mary's agitation. He watched her, and saw her greet friend after friend in the most cordial, self-possessed manner. It was only at *his* touch that she trembled and changed color. He might have thought her embarrassment came from the recollection of their last meeting had she flushed when she first met his eye. But she did not. When she stretched out her hand in greeting, it was with ease and a divinely beautiful smile on her face. It was only when her hand met *his* that she showed agitation. From that moment he felt he had a power over her such as he wielded over so many women, and which so few could resist. He was overjoyed. He determined to use this power to the utmost, to make it serve him in attracting to him this woman. He was glad, now, that Hugh had become no more deeply involved, and that he was dead. If he should marry Mary, there would be no one to stand between him and Mabelthorp.

That night on which he met Mary, he never slept. He lay awake, forming his plans. To marry Mary, and then to plunge into politics and climb up where he could make his name known, and to sway the people beneath him—this was his ambition. Through an alliance with Mary and with his money he determined to carve a future. "Who knows," he thought to himself, "what I shall be? Perchance the highest office in the gift of the people may yet be mine." And in the anticipation of it, he almost hugged himself for joy. Never for a moment did it enter his head to attain all this through honorable means. Mary, Mabelthorp, money, friends, were merely stepping-stones to his ambition. What did *he* care, so long as he gained it, how he reached the goal! If each step had to be taken over a grave, and each grave that of a dear friend, he would have

unhesitatingly gone forward. He was totally callous to all things human save humanity's dollars. It is almost impossible to conceive of any one more degraded, designing or malicious. His jealousy for what did not belong to him, for what had never been his, and on which he had no claim, was absolutely fiendish. Who was to blame for this warped mental condition? From his very conception he had been impregnated with sin by parents who were consumed by vanity, avarice and envy so intensified that they had built into the body of their unborn child their own sinful dispositions. The very blood and atoms of his body were saturated with these evil attributes. His mother, vain, frivolous, sensual, revelling in her own physical beauty, laboring to enhance and make it more attractive, resulted in her bringing into the world a child with a beautiful body, but with a dwarfed and blackened soul. Born into this contaminating atmosphere, to parents who knew no holy impulses, who reverenced no god but mammon, he had grown to manhood, and had gone out among men, attracting to himself all the most evil, shrewd, unscrupulous lovers of mammon, and with his perfect physical beauty and his intense animal and hypnotic power blighting and repelling every good thing that came in his way, he was worse than the wild beast of the forest. Such ever is the human animal that goes through the world seeking whom it may devour, and leaving sorrow and disaster in its wake.

Such was the man who now swore a solemn oath to either enter the Eden of this peaceful home, as master, or bring it down in wreck and ruin on the unoffending heads of its inmates. Therefore, he went to work, with the cunning of the very devil himself, to execute his plans. He determined to make no more mistakes. He would set lynx eyes to watch the general, he would know exactly

what he was doing, where he went, whom he visited, and in this way he would be enabled, little by little, to hem him in and wind him in a labyrinth from which he could not escape. He determined to get Solmon under his control, and use him as his instrument. Even Solmon, with all his love of greed, could not match Sidney in his shrewdness and in his worship of the mighty dollar. His days, now, were taken up in scheming and planning, and never had he been so happy. Day by day he exulted as he saw the web tightening about the general. It was to be ruin to the Starkweathers or triumph for himself.

CHAPTER V.

SIDNEY IS FOILED AGAIN.

At about this time, and while Sidney was still in Clinton, as he was walking down the street, one day, he noticed a young woman somewhat in advance of him. He recollected that he had seen this same person once or twice before. He remembered the shapely form, and noticed that she seemed to be looking for some number as she consulted a paper she carried in her hand. He also remembered that he had tried to get a glimpse of her face, but that it was concealed behind a veil. Now, however, she wore none. She was walking hurriedly, looking neither to the right nor to the left. Her dress, that just cleared the ground, was black and very plain, but it did not conceal the exquisite form, the beautiful, sloping shoulders, the swelling bust, and the slender waist. She was a little above medium height, and walked easily and gracefully. Sidney noticed that nearly every one she met turned and looked after her. But apparently she heeded no one. When she reached the crossing, she put her hand back and daintily lifted her dress. The hand was ungloved, and white as snow, with beautiful, long, tapering fingers. Sidney just caught a glimpse of a neat boot, worn, it is

true, but showing the arched instep of the patrician. The graceful lifting of the dress, the dainty stepping across the street, the carriage of the figure, all stamped her a lady.

Sidney was interested and was determined to see her face. Accordingly, he quickened his pace; but she was walking so rapidly that it was some minutes before he caught up with her. Just as he was about to pass her, intending to get a good look at her, she hastily entered a small confectionery shop. He was just near enough so that as she turned to go in, he had a glimpse of the side of her face and her beautifully rounded chin. He passed on, but he was not satisfied. She had an air, a style about her, that was not at all in keeping with her attire. And this game-hunter at once determined to learn who she was. Her walking straight along, minding her own business, noticing no one, was no protection to her from Sidney. Rather, it was a stimulus for pursuit. He felt sure, from the glances he had seen persons bestow on her, that she must be beautiful. Her figure showed that she was youthful. Then, she was evidently poor, which, to the vulgar eyes of Sidney, made her common prey for flirtation. This handsome *roué* had been graduated in the art of flirting. How many silly, unfortunate girls had flirted with him to their everlasting sorrow. Sidney walked a little way, then turned back, thinking he would enter the shop. Just as he reached it, she appeared, carrying a small parcel in her hand. As she stepped out, she lifted her eyes and looked straight ahead, passing rapidly on down the street. Sidney was there, right before her, but she never noticed him. Her face was so different from what he had expected that he was startled. Beautiful? Yes; but the saddest face imaginable. All the roundness of youth was there, but not a shadow of color. She had great, mourn-

ful, black eyes that made one's heart ache just to look at them, and would have brought pity to the heart of a stone. Not so with Sidney. He immediately began to analyze the situation, as he kept her in sight. First, did she see him? He thought she did, but she showed no sign. His vanity was piqued. He could not possibly understand how any woman could see him and be indifferent. He did not like it. She *should* notice him. He would follow her and make it impossible for her not to see him. Then, her black dress, and her face so different from what he had expected. Her dress showed she was poor, her face showed that she was in trouble; poverty and trouble, and no doubt in need of money. Oh, it would be easy to manage the whole thing! He would just find out where she lived, and take his time about it. She was so different from the flirty dames and damsels that he was accustomed to meet in the street. It was plain to see that she was not out looking for prey. She was too earnest, too serious. He began to feel a new sensation. Did he have one honest, good thought as he followed this woman down the street? Not one. Every step she took, every graceful motion of her body, only awakened in him a desire to possess her, to ruin her. And then cast her off? *That* did not enter into his calculations. That was an after consideration for which he did not care. According to his code, *she* must look out for that.

But where was she going? They had reached the suburbs, and were on the direct road that led to Mabelthorp. He was now deeply interested in the pursuit. On she went, closely followed by Sidney, when, what was his surprise and delight to see her turn to a wretched, tumbledown cottage, and without knocking, enter it. The place was not much more than a mere shelter of three or four rooms. Yet, it was clean and tidy, and there were

a few pots of flowers in the windows that were screened with simple muslin curtains. The house belonged to him, and was occupied by an old woman, a Mrs. Dennis, who took in plain sewing, and did anything by which she could make an honest living. Sidney was overjoyed. It would be so easy, now, to find out who she was and all about her.

He walked on down the road a little way. Then, he returned and knocked at the door. It was opened by the old woman, who, evidently was much surprised and flustered. Sidney made an excuse for his call by asking some questions about the house, to which the poor old soul made almost incoherent replies. She was quite overpowered by the visit of the rich Sidney Banks. He had never troubled himself to call and see her before, her dealings having been entirely with his agent. Sidney saw the embarrassment his visit caused, and he enjoyed it; saw how his presence made the poor old woman almost speechless with awe. But Sidney was very adroit. Little by little, he gradually drew her out, until he discovered that in order to eke out her rent and lessen her expenses, she had let one of her rooms to a lady, a seamstress like herself.

Sidney concluded that he had learned enough for the present. The fact that the woman was permanently located there, was sufficient. He could see her at his leisure. He arose, and telling the old lady he would make some repairs in the house, and that he would come again, he was about to take his departure, when an inner door opened and the woman whom he had been following, entered. She was carrying an infant in her arms. She was looking down at it, and began saying something to Mrs. Dennis about the babe; therefore, she did not see Sidney until she was well in the room. Then, looking up suddenly, she caught his expression of admiration. She was

deadly pale, but at the sight of a stranger the blood surged to her face in a torrent of embarrassment. The old woman said:

"Mrs. Multon, this is Mr. Banks, our landlord."

Mrs. Multon inclined her head slightly in acknowledgment of the introduction, and murmuring something about not knowing that Mrs. Dennis had a visitor, turned to leave the room. But Sidney sprang forward, and pushing a chair toward her, said:

"Pray be seated. I was just going to take my departure;" and placing the chair in the most desirable place, he said in his most winning manner and with the tenderest solicitude: "You *must* take it, or I shall feel I have driven you from the room. You look tired."

A low murmured "Thank you," and she sank into the chair; for she *was tired*, oh, so tired!

She had removed her hat. Her hair, that was without bang or curl, and black as a raven's wing, was parted in the middle, showing a snowy line from forehead to crown and was drawn back in thick braids that were coiled down low on the back of her shapely head. As she bent over the babe in her arms, she was a fascinating picture. Had she been happy and prosperous she would have been strikingly handsome. But her face was too wan and pale, and so very, very sad. Sidney did not know what to make of it. Could this child be hers? She was not much more than a child herself. He made several remarks, hoping to draw her out, to get a reply from her; but she did not raise her eyes nor speak until he was leaving the house. Then, she merely glanced up and inclined her head. At the door he made some remark to the old lady about the fence, and gradually drew her out of the house into the yard. She was a garrulous old soul, and when she had recovered from the embarrassment caused by his sudden visit, it was not

difficult for a smooth-tongued man like Sidney, to get her to tell all she knew concerning Mrs. Multon. It was not much. She only knew that she was a widow of a few months' duration; that she had little money; that her babe had been very ill, and that she was looking for work.

Sidney was more than half disgusted with himself. He never had thought that she might be a married woman, not that that fact would have cut any figure in his pursuit of her, especially had her husband been living; for that circumstance always lent interest to the chase. The delight of outwitting some one had always been to him as great a compensation as the possession of the one pursued. As Sidney wended his way back into town, he thought to himself: "What a fool I have made of myself, trotting all the afternoon after a woman of that stripe. She may think she is very slick with her fairy-story to the old woman about being a widow; but she can't fool me. It's another case of loving 'not wisely, but too well.' What idiots women are to think they can go about, palming off such stories, and expecting people to believe them! Of course she knows I am rich, and her shyness and refusal to enter into the conversation, were only a very thin ruse to lead me on. If there were anything to lend a little spice to the hunt, the game might be worth the candle. But, as it is, it's too easy sailing. I have but to open my arms and my purse, and she would fall into both, kid and all. Oh, no, my lady! I'm too old a bird for that sort of thing. It takes better chaff than a fine figure and a dainty carriage to catch me. Besides, it doesn't matter what you have been, you're no beauty now, with your big hollow eyes and pale face. So, good-by to you."

Thus soliloquized Sidney as he walked back into town. To the judge of human nature, his appearance, as he glanced inquiringly at every woman that passed him, in-

dicated his pride, haughtiness, and above all, his sensuality. But also to the casual observer, he was a magnificent specimen of perfectly groomed manhood. And nearly every woman he met was willing to bestow upon him, at least a second glance.

Sidney thought he had put Mrs. Multon effectually out of his mind. Not so. No matter where he went, he could mentally see the graceful figure, as she walked along, or as she bent over her babe. The pale face and great black eyes haunted him with the result, that the next afternoon found him at the cottage. But although he stayed some time, Mrs. Multon did not make her appearance. He called the next day and the next, with the same result.

At last, he concluded he would have to make some excuse to see her, so that he could directly ask for her. With this thought in mind he talked to his mother about Mrs. Multon, said she was poor, that she needed assistance, and asked if she did not need a sewing-woman to come and live in the house.

Sidney's mother was too much like him not to understand this darling son. She finally consented, but there was nothing good nor noble in her face, as she said:

"If you want me to, I will take the woman. I can find plenty for her to do; but I'll not have a squalling baby around. Let her put it an asylum for children. I am on the board of directors of one of these institutions, and I can make arrangements for them to take the child."

"The very thing!" thought Sidney. "That brat has been the drawback all the time. Why didn't I think of it before? No doubt she'll be glad to be rid of it;" and with this thought in mind, he hurried to the cottage. He knocked at the door, and after a moment's waiting, to his great pleasure, Mrs. Multon opened it. He lifted his

hat and moved forward to enter; but, instead of stepping back and allowing him to do so, she, in the most self-possessed manner imaginable, said, in return to his salutation:

"Good morning, Mr. Banks. I am sorry, but Mrs. Dennis is not at home."

"How soon will she return? I don't mind waiting," said Sidney, very much irritated at her indifference and at her keeping him standing at the door, like a common messenger.

"I don't think she will return for some time," replied Mrs. Multon, and he noticed a faint tinge of color come into her face over which flitted an expression of annoyance. Still, with her hand upon the door, she did not move, evidently waiting for him to go. And it was very plain to be seen that she desired it. A man of refined feeling would have hesitated about thrusting himself upon any woman under the circumstances. Not so with Sidney. Her evident reluctance only whetted his determination to submit her to his will. Assuming his most adroit manner, and in a voice in which there was apparently much interest, he said:

"Mrs. Multon, Mrs. Dennis told me you were looking for some work. And it is you I came to see about some work for my mother."

She looked up joyfully, eagerly. The color swept into her face, her eyes gleamed, and, for the moment, she was startlingly beautiful. It was like the sun shining through the clouds and rain.

Not an expression was lost on Sidney. He had not realized before, that it was possible for any one to be so overjoyed at the prospect of obtaining work, that it could completely transform one. But such was the case with Mrs. Multon. The eager light that shone in her eyes

gratified him, and he thought: "By-and-by she will be beautiful;" and he said in his most fascinating manner:

"You are not going to keep me out here on the steps, are you? Won't you let me come in and talk to you about what my mother wishes?"

She hesitated an instant, as if she had some reason for wishing him not to enter. Then she stepped back, and he walked into the house. She placed a chair for him, and made some slight apology about the room not being in perfect order, while he, in the most gallant and seductive manner, replied significantly:

"I never know *what* is in a room. I only know *who* is in it."

It would have taken a duller woman than Mrs. Multon not to have understood the significance of the words. And again the color flooded her face. She was so young, so helpless, so needy. It was a fiery ordeal. Would she come through it unscathed?

Sidney watched the color come and go in the sensitive face, with a thrill of exultation. He had in his hand a parcel that he now presented to her, saying:

"Here is a basket of strawberries. I purchased them, as I came along, thinking you might enjoy them;" and he held them out toward her. She hesitated.

"Take them," he said, "I want you to have them."

Mrs. Multon was a lady. To refuse them she thought would seem prudish, and she tried to think he only had meant to be kind; but her proud features showed her feelings, and it was with evident reluctance that she accepted the gift. When Sidney gave her the parcel he managed to touch her hand. Again the telltale blood leapt to her brow. He liked this sort of thing, and determined to prolong it. But Mrs. Multon, summoning all her self-pos-

session, and with a determined, courageous air, seated herself, and with a hopeful look on her face, said:

"Now, Mr. Banks, I am ready and anxious to know how I can serve your mother." She looked so matter-of-fact and assumed such a business-like manner, that, for the moment, he felt quite disconcerted. Her manner said, as plain as words, "I am waiting. Please make your business known." She evidently had recovered her control, and with her white hands folded in her lap, she waited for him to begin.

Sidney did not like this at all. He had intended to prolong the interview, to lead up to it gradually. This matter-of-fact proceeding was new to him; he was at loss to know how to begin. Had she no sentiment? Could she turn what might be a friendly, jolly, little visit into a cold, business transaction so soon? He wanted to know her a little better. He wanted time to ingratiate himself into her confidence, to appear to be interested to such a degree that she should feel that he was her benefactor. Finally he said:

"You seem to be in a hurry, Mrs. Multon."

"Indeed I am. I am anxious to get to work and earn something," she replied as she turned her pure face toward him. "And let me say, now, that I think it was very good in you to remember what Mrs. Dennis told you, and to speak to your mother about me. I thank you for it, and I hope I can, in some way, show my appreciation. If you will only tell me what I can do, or if your mother will only send me the work, that I may get it at once, I will be so glad."

Could any one see her sitting there, with eager face, and not have his heart respond in deepest sympathy? Her appeal for work was like a cry for help. It would have moved the most callous heart.

But the true pathos of the woman's cry fell unheeded on the hot, fiery, nature of this man. He only thought, "She is the least sentimental woman I ever met." It was disappointing. Finally he said:

"It's too bad a charming woman like you should have to earn her living by sewing."

She looked at him with pained surprise, but seemed not to know what to say, and he went on:

"Have you no friends nor relatives to look after you?"

"No one," she said.

"You are so young, so beautiful, to be all alone."

Mrs. Multon crimsoned painfully, and springing from her chair, she cried in a voice of agony:

"Oh, Mr. Banks! do not let us talk of *myself*. Tell me what it is your mother wants me to do. I want work. I can do it if only I have the opportunity. If she will only send it to me, she need not be afraid to trust me. I was taught in a convent, and I sew beautifully."

Her voice was full of tears. Sidney came toward her. He could seem anything he chose, and bringing a world of sympathy into his voice, he said, attempting to take her hand:

"You poor little girl! All alone in the world! You must let *me* look after you."

She drew back; she instinctively knew something was wrong. He noticed she was indifferent to his compliments. How was he going to manage this woman? Every minute increased his interest in her. She was so different from the women he had heretofore met, that he was puzzled to know what course to pursue; but every move she made away from him, only attracted him the more. He was growing impatient. He always had been so conscious of his power, and in affairs of this kind he always had had his own way. Women literally fell into his arms; but here

was a woman that acted as if it would take very little to make her fly from him. So poor a judge of human nature was he, that he was not sure whether she was affecting this, or whether it was real. But this very uncertainty lent an interest to the affair. He concluded, at last, that he would have to use a good deal of tact. So, restraining his impatience, he said, very tenderly:

"I am truly and deeply sorry for you, and I am going to take you to my mother, and ask her to look after you."

Instantly a warm, beautiful light stole into her face; her eyes grew soft and tender, filling with tears.

"You will go to her, will you not?" continued he.

"Oh, if I could!" she replied, and for an instant her eyes were blinded with tears. His voice and manner touched her, and she thought, "He must be a good man to want to take me to his mother." The very word, *mother,* seemed to open the flood-gates of her soul, and it was with difficulty that she could control herself.

"Well, you can go. There is nothing to prevent, is there? This is no place for you."

"But my little one—your mother, does she know?"

"Oh, yes; I told her all about it. She will find a place for it, and fix the matter up so you won't have any trouble."

She did not take in the significance of his words, and a soft flush suffused her face as she said:

"How good she must be to be willing to take me, a stranger, into her house. Believe me, I shall do everything I can to merit her kindness."

"Oh, that's all right. It's my house, and whatever *I* say, goes. So you can depend upon having a home there if you please *me.*"

He was so anxious to have her bestow all her gratitude on him. He did not intend that his mother should share

it at all. His mother knew this precious son too well to interfere with any of his plans. He had no fear of her.

Mrs. Multon suddenly felt a chill pass over her at his words; but rallying herself, she tried to think it just his peculiar way of expressing himself, and she said:

"It's very kind in you to take such an interest in me."

"Of course I take an interest in you," and again he approached her. She stepped back, and he said: "Don't run away. I'm awfully interested in you, and I want to be good to you. You don't think I've been coming here for days to see old Mrs. Dennis, do you? I saw you on the street several times, and was awfully struck by your appearance. At last, I followed you home. I was delighted when I found you were living in my house. I came in that first day, hoping to see you; but you've kept out of my sight ever since. I think you are pretty, and I like you, and I want to be good to you. I came here to-day, determined to see you. If you had not come to the door, I would have stayed here until you made your appearance."

Mrs. Multon was gazing at him with staring eyes.

"What is the use in our playing about the bush?" he went on. "You must see that I am interested in you. There's no use in my masking my feelings any longer. You see, I want you where I can see more of you. We'll find a place for that baby of yours, and——"

"What do you mean?" cried the horrified woman.

"Why, there are plenty of homes for stray kids," he laughed coarsely. "I can easily get them to take yours. Then you can come to us."

Mrs. Multon sank into a chair and hid her quivering face in her hands.

"It isn't every woman I would take into my house with my mother. You must see by that I think a lot of you.

Surely, you must understand me," and Sidney took a step nearer her.

She darted from her chair, her face livid, and exclaimed:

"Yes, I do understand, that you are a devil—a fiend incarnate!" And turning, she fled into an inner room, closing the door after her.

Sidney heard the key turn in the lock. For a minute, he was dumb. He saw that in his haste and impatience he had shown his hand too soon. Still he thought, "What is the difference? She is not so good that she need be scared." That this humble creature dared show such independence, nettled him exceedingly. "She is as proud as a queen. People in her position have no right to be proud." It was ridiculous. He laughed to himself in a satirical, sneering manner. "What airs!" he thought. He took out his watch and glanced at it. "She'll come back all right. I'll give her five minutes to return."

He sat down to wait. It was not a pleasant occupation. As the minutes flew by, he began to have some misgivings. He never had experienced anything of this sort before.

Could her suffering awaken no responsive chord? Did no spark of chivalry dwell within his breast? Could he not see that tragedy, not shame, was written in her face? No, his heart was wholly unsusceptible to a single good impulse. He had depended so much on his physical appearance and the worth of the reflected glitter of his gold. Women always had been ready to bow down to both. He had depended upon these same things to bring this woman into subjection. They had never failed before; they should not now. He would try what gold would do. "That," he thought, "always makes an impression on this

kind of woman. The weight of my purse may have more eloquence than my speech."

Who would have dreamed, to look at him, that beneath the fair seeming, such evil thought could find lodgment? Happy it is for mankind that the eye rarely pierces beneath the veil that conceals the hideous depravity of the heart of such a man.

Ten minutes sped on, and Mrs. Multon did not appear. Finding some writing materials, on a little table in the room, he wrote the following letter:

"My dear Girl: Don't think me less friendly because I talked plainly to you. I leave the enclosed, because I am interested in you, and as an evidence of my good faith and intentions. I will return this afternoon when I hope to find you more reasonable."

There was no signature. He enclosed a twenty-dollar bill, addressed the envelope, and going to the door through which she had passed, he knocked once, twice, and receiving no response, he called out:

"I am going now, and I leave a note for you, which I shall slip under the door." This he did, and left the house. But he was not in an enviable frame of mind, and as he strode away, he said:

"She shall pay for this trouble when I once get her into my power. I will yet make you my humble servant, my lady, and you will come and go at my pleasure."

When Mrs. Multon fled to her room, she sank on the floor and buried her face in her hands. "It's horrible, horrible!" she moaned. The solitude of her heart, at this moment, was fearful. She was so supremely wretched. Before this, she had not been altogether hopeless. Her money was nearly gone, and now, between herself and

work, there seemed an insurmountable wall as high as heaven. She started up, and began pacing the floor. Her face was pale as death, her eyes set and staring. She seemed past tears, and yet she appeared hardly to have crossed the threshold of childhood. She had been made a woman prematurely. Her beautiful face, the proudly rounded features, the great sorrowful eyes beneath their black brows, the graceful figure, and the refined manner contrasted strangely with her surroundings. The struggle in her soul was bitter; it was almost too much for human endurance. She was treading the wine-press alone.

Suddenly a little cry reached her ears. A sharp sword seemed to pierce her heart, and going to her babe, she took it up in her arms, and frantically kissed it, moaning piteously:

"You are my only blessing and my misfortune!" she exclaimed in anguish.

Just then Sidney rapped at the door. It seemed as if she would suffocate with fear. She stood trembling and irresolute, not knowing to what extreme he might go in his baseness. Then he spoke, and she saw the letter slipped under the door, and heard him leave the house. Passing into the other room, she locked the outside door. Then she opened the letter and read it. How her cheek burned with indignation! She went to the table and wrote:

"I am poor, almost starving; but I would rather die than accept favors from you. Do not come near me. I will not see you. BERNICE MULTON."

She enclosed the money and addressed and sealed the envelope.

Sidney called in the afternon. Mrs. Dennis opened the door. He asked for Mrs. Multon. Mrs. Dennis went to call her, and returned with the letter, saying:

"She said you must excuse her, and asked me to give you this." The old woman looked puzzled. Mrs. Multon had told her nothing.

Sidney took the letter and walked over to the window, standing with his back to Mrs. Dennis while he opened and read it. He thrust the money into his pocket and crushed the letter in his hand. "Starve and be damned," he muttered. "Who cares? I don't." And turning on his heel he took up his hat and left the house without so much as noticing the old lady who was almost speechless with curiosity.

With joy, Mrs. Multon heard Sidney leave the house. It had been a fearful day for her. She was almost crazed; but she felt she must not yield, and, with the thought of her babe, she faithfully plied her needle on some work Mrs. Dennis had to do for Miss Starkweather.

Sidney went away, his eyes burning with suppressed wrath and excitement. He exclaimed to himself: "Damn her! What does she mean by such airs?"

He had frittered away much time in numberless flirtations. It had been a deliberate pastime with him to entrap hearts that became worthless as soon as gained. He had never been obliged to waste money, nor to take much trouble in the pursuit. The game always had been so easy to capture. The covers in which he usually hunted, were in the circles of the society in which he moved. Sidney did not have to go to the slums to find victims; rather his business was to make victims for the slums.

As he walked homeward, he determined to think no more about Mrs. Multon. He told himself again and again that he did not care for her; that she was common and beneath him. But it was of no use. He could not put her out of his mind. The poor, friendless, suffering woman, in her disdain of him, only had given him an ad-

ditional incentive to pursue her. He lived over again his interview with her that morning. He remembered the changing color of her face as it lighted up with hope. It was useless to deny that she possessed an indescribable charm and force that, even in sorrow, revealed themselves in every look, in every motion, in every tone. All this came back to him, the beautiful hands, the girlish, child-like figure, the soft, satiny skin, the shining black hair; and set his blood on fire with desire.

Before he reached home, he had mapped out a line of conduct. He concluded to change his tactics. He would write her a letter of apology for his impetuosity, and convince her that he had just been trying to test her. He would woo, he would lie, and if all these failed, he would use force. She should not escape him.

Then began days of torture for Mrs. Multon. First, he sent a letter accompanied by a gift; both were returned to him, the letter unopened.

Sidney could always gain access to the old woman; so he thought he would work through her, and thus obtain another interview. But Mrs. Multon would not be entrapped. At last, he learned through Mrs. Dennis, that her last cent was gone, and that she was dependent, even for her food, upon the old woman. He felt, now, that if he could force her, even from this wretched shelter and the assistance she received there, he would have her entirely at his mercy. He therefore told Mrs. Dennis that he had sold the house, and that she must move out at once, for in a few days they would begin to tear it down. It was sad news for Mrs. Dennis, for it was difficult to find a place to live in, that was within her means; and she began to feel very hard toward Mrs. Multon, who must be to blame for it in some way, she felt sure.

The next day Sidney learned, for the first time, that

Mary Starkweather had called at the little house several times, and had met and talked with Mrs. Multon. This alarmed him very much. She must not go to Mary with any tales, and so interfere with his arrangements there. Accordingly, he told Mrs. Dennis of the mortgage, and of how in a few days the Starkweathers would be homeless.

It was on Friday that Sidney made his call. He told Mrs. Dennis that the men would begin pulling down the house the next day, and that she must move out at once.

"I will send my mother to look after Mrs. Multon," he said. "She will come in her carriage for her to-morrow. You can tell Mrs. Multon so. My mother is much interested in her."

He hoped Mrs. Multon heard him, and that she would give him no trouble. He felt, at last, that he was compelled to have the direct assistance of some one, and there was no one that he could trust in this affair like his precious mother. He went out and sauntered around, making a pretence of looking at the house; but his real desire was to catch a glimpse of Mrs. Multon. What was his delight to see her sitting, with her babe in her arms, on a rude bench in the rear end of the lot, under the shade of an old apple-tree. She held her babe with one arm; the other was resting on the back of the bench, and she leaned her head listlessly and wearily on her hand. She looked so lonely and friendless. Who, save Sidney Banks, would not have shrunk from intruding upon this woman with his unscrupulous designs. Her very attitude of despair gave him pleasure. He went toward her, smiling like a fiend. It was exasperating to have to handle this woman with gloves, but he realized that at the very first familiar word, she would fly from him. He deter-

mined to be patient and ingratiate himself into her confidence.

He was some distance from her, when she looked up and saw him. She flushed and started to rise, then sank back on the seat, and awaited his approach. Her waiting for him spoke volumes to Sidney, and he thought, "She is beginning to weaken." He came up close to her, and stood with his hat in his hand. He spoke to her. She took not the slightest notice of him. All this was a jar to his vanity. For a minute, he grew hard and fierce. Then, realizing that if he would conquer he must resort to artifice, he seated himself on the bench near her, and leaning forward, poured out all he had written in his letter that she had not read, and much more—how he had told his mother about her, how deeply interested she was, and would give herself and babe a home. He apologized most humbly for his conduct.

The woman sat as if congealed to ice. He made a point of telling her all about the Starkweathers' financial troubles. He could see enough of her face to know that she was listening intently to his revelation of their affairs, and he noted the look of disappointment and anguish that swept over her face. "Aha!" he thought, "I have forestalled a move in that direction." Then he told her that the cottage must be vacated the next day, that his mother would come for her on the morrow, and bring her and her babe to her house, where she would remain as long as she liked.

He waited for her reply. But she was silent, tearless, and neither moved nor spoke.

This was very exasperating, but he controlled himself with the thought that she was having her day, and that his was to come. He arose, and holding out his hand, said:

"Will you not give me your hand in token of forgiveness? If you knew the warmth and tenderness of my regard for you, you would not refuse."

A shudder seemed to pass over Mrs. Multon. She hid her face in her arm to conceal her expression, and still remained silent. Sidney thought she was weeping. He felt that at last she was conquered. Her rebellion was gone. A little forbearance and gentleness, and he would have her where he wanted her. He could afford to wait. And concentrating as much feeling in his voice as possible, he said, with apparent consideration:

"Well, I won't insist upon it; but the time will come when you will confess I am your best friend. I can afford to wait, and now I will go, and you can look for my mother to-morrow. Good-by."

Mrs. Multon sat for full ten minutes in the attitude in which Sidney had left her. Then, raising her head, and stifling a hard, dry sob, she exclaimed in bitterest anguish: "Oh, God of my mother, forsake me not! Lead me, lead me, where I may find rest and protection."

Then she arose and went into the house.

When Sidney's mother came for her the next morning she was gone.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HOMECOMING OF CHARLES THORNTON.

WHILE Sidney was so persistently pursuing Mrs. Multon, he had not neglected nor lost sight of affairs connected with Mabelthorp. For weeks he had seen Mary driving in and out of Clinton almost every day. She went everywhere. She was to be seen at all important functions, and she seemed to be radiantly happy. She remained true to her resolve to overcome her dislike to Sidney, and made a special point of speaking to him whenever they met, and of talking to him, if only for a few minutes. She had danced with him several times, and out of sheer politeness, she and her father had been forced to take him in their carriage for a short distance, on two or three occasions. What an effort all this had cost Mary, no one but herself knew. Strive as she would, there was ever that awful repugnance to him. She was so sensitive to influences, that, coming upon him suddenly, would, at times, make her sick, and she would think to herself: "I know when I meet that man just how one must feel at coming suddenly upon one of those deadly cobras in India."

But the more she felt this, the more she strove to

overcome it and to obtain the mastery of her feelings. In this effort she was so far successful, outwardly, that she completely deceived Sidney. Not that this was difficult to do where this young pachyderm roué was personally concerned. He seemed to have no intuitive faculties. He could perceive nothing without analysis, and as he had no aids to analysis, except his ear and eye, both of which were attuned to the material, it can readily be discerned how very easy it was for him to deceive himself.

Things were approaching a crisis at Mabelthorp, and Sidney began to feel anxious. Not a move did the general make but that one of Sidney's detectives knew and reported it.

It was at this juncture that Mary attended a party one night, where she had danced with Sidney, and he was leading her to a seat, when, passing near a group of chattering dancers, she distinctly heard some one say:

"Oh, I guess it's a match all right. Isn't she beautiful and distinguished?—and he so rich and handsome!"

She heard no more. For a moment, her heart stood still. She felt as if she had received a deadly insult. That any one could ever associate her with Sidney Banks seemed utterly incredible. She was hot with indignation, and she felt that every drop of blood in her body had surged to her face, neck and arms. She wondered if he had heard it, and hoped he had not. Just then, she saw her father coming toward her. It struck her that he looked dreadfully worn and tired. She had noticed the same look on his face in the afternoon, as he stood before her mother's portrait. This thought flitted through her mind only for an instant, and, as she approached him, she said:

"I was looking for you, papa, for I am tired and want to go home." Then, turning to Sidney, she hastily bade

him good-night, hardly giving him a glance, and she and her father were soon in the carriage, where Mary hysterically burst into tears, and burying her face in her father's shoulder, and with both his arms around her, she exclaimed: "I can't bear it, I can't bear it!"

The general was amazed and bewildered to find his daughter in such a nervous condition. She was not given to tears, and it was some time before he could quiet her, and draw from her the cause of her agitation. And there came back to him the triumphant, exultant look which Sidney had worn as he approached him with Mary after the dance. He realized, now, the effort his daughter had been making to overcome her dislike for Sidney. But at this moment the general was far more exercised about his financial affairs than about anything concerning Sidney Banks, and comforting his daughter, as best he could, he urged her, on reaching home, to retire at once, and forget all about it.

When General Starkweather had given the mortgage on Mabelthorp, it had been for the period of eighteen months. Through a friend he had made some investments in the West, and from these, together with his regular income, he had expected to be able to take up the mortgage when it was due. But owing to the financial crisis, his investments, instead of proving a source of revenue, had been a burden and an expense. While this was unfortunate and annoying, it gave him no special anxiety, as he knew that with the passing of the panic he would be able to adjust matters. Therefore, the only thing to do was to extend the mortgage. It never occurred to him that there would be any difficulty in doing so, as it was Mr. Solmon's business to lend money, and so long as his interest was paid, he supposed, there would be no difficulty to encounter.

What was his surprise, when he called upon Solmon, to have him positively and flatly refuse to renew the mortgage, giving various excuses for not doing so. This was but a few days before the mortgage was due. While the general knew that it could not be foreclosed without a regular process of law that would consume about a month, still he had a vague sense of alarm. He at once made an effort to find some one to take up the mortgage. He found a broker who assured the general that while he did not have the money just then, he would have it in ample time to save the property, and that he need have no anxiety. But General Starkweather, thinking it just as well to be on the safe side, found another broker, who said a large sum of money would be due him in three weeks, and in case the first party the general had seen could not take up the mortgage, he would do so.

Now, these two men had been doing business for years in Clinton, and while the general did not know either of them personally, he knew them by reputation, and supposed they were honest business men. They were, in fact, nothing more or less than tools of Sidney Banks, just as they had been tools of Sidney's father, who for years had loaned large sums of money at exorbitant interest, through them.

One can easily see that the intention was to hold the general in expectation until the last minute possible, so that he would have no time to obtain the money elsewhere.

When the general, expecting to have one or the other of these brokers take up the mortgage, went to them, he found that neither one of them could do so, assigning as a reason that they, so far, had been disappointed in money due them, but still holding out the hope that they would have it in time. He did not wait for them, however, but

went to New York, where he finally found a broker who assured the general that he could depend upon him. But the next day the man telegraphed he could do nothing in the matter, the truth being that one of Bank's men had seen him and made it an object for him to break his promise.

Thus, everywhere the general turned, he met disappointment. He had been truly exercised and annoyed by it all, but he had not been very much alarmed. For he was so confident that the matter could be arranged. Suddenly, the terrible fact stared him in the face that his home might be swept from him. He knew Solmon was hard and cold. He could expect no mercy from him. What to do he did not know. He felt he must tell Mary, but how could he?

Mary was engaged to be married. When she was in Europe she renewed her acquaintance with Charles Thornton, who was then connected with the American Legation in London. She had known him all her life, and they had long been attached to each other. Soon after their meeting in London, they became engaged, and the marriage was to take place immediately after Mr. Thornton's return to America. And now Mary was expecting him on the next steamer.

Young Mr. Thornton was the son of a clergyman, and he was not rich. It was a true love match. It was this great love that had been playing on Mary's heart-strings, drawing forth the sweetest harmony of her soul. Ah! she had been so busy, so happy, so joyous, that her father felt he could not tell her yet. He would wait another day. Perhaps something would happen to ward off this blow. Although he had urged her to go to bed and sleep, he, himself, could not sleep; his mind was tortured, and he

kept thinking how he could best break the news to his daughter.

Mary had gone to her room, but her nerves were all unstrung, and she could not rest. The air seemed oppressive. Donning a *negligée* robe, and dismissing her maid, she threw herself in a chair by the window. She was alone with her thoughts. It seemed, all of a sudden, as if some terrible darkness had come over the world. She had a sense of poignant loneliness in her heart, for which she could not account. Then she remembered the care-worn look on her father's face. She listened. She was sure she could hear him moving about in his room. What could be troubling him? Could it be he objected to her marriage and dreaded losing her? No, that could not be, for she did not intend to leave him, and already he talked about Charles as if he were his son. Then what was it? Sidney, Charles, her father, were all mixed up in a whirl in her mind.

If Mary, in her pure heart, could have hated any one, she would have hated Sidney Banks, for she felt that he was the cause of the bitter drops in her cup of happiness. He had always been distasteful to her, but she had tried to be tolerant of this man, and her actions had been misconstrued. She had been so loyal to Charles, and she felt it was an insult to him as well as to herself. However, to-morrow or the next day he would be with her. Then the engagement would be announced, and that would put an end to all stupid gossip.

But what could be the matter with her father? It was something serious she was sure; she could feel it. There never had been any secrets between them; there must not be now. To-morrow she would know; he must tell her all. "Dear, dear papa! He has been father and mother to me!"

Her sensitive nature had been rudely shaken, and she now felt the necessity of controlling herself. If anything were troubling her father, she must be strong and comfort him—not harass him.

With this last thought, she threw herself on the bed, and slept until dawn. Making a hasty toilet, she went down to the dining-room to await her father. When he appeared, she greeted him with a bright smile, and led him to the table, where she chatted in her accustomed and cheerful manner.

How Mary loved her father! His pale face made her heart ache.

After breakfast, the general took his paper, and going out on the lawn, he sat down on a rustic seat. Mary, watching him, saw that while his eyes were resting on the paper, he was not reading, and going up behind him, she twined her arms about his neck, and said coaxingly:

"Papa, dear, what is the matter?"

Her father took one of the little hands, and kissing it, answered:

"Nothing, daughter, I——"

But he got no further, for Mary, placing her hand on his lips, said, with her pretty, imperious air:

"Now, now, now—no stories, papa dear. I have been watching you, and something *is* troubling you. Now, I have come out here to find out what it is, and I don't intend to go until you tell me."

She slipped into the seat by his side and laid her head on his shoulder, with her arm thrown lightly about his neck. Her loose sleeves had fallen back, and the general sat still for some moments, stroking the pretty arm that was as white as ivory, and caressing the beautiful head. But he could not speak.

Presently, Mary lifted her head and looked at him.

Great tears were streaming down his cheeks, and she saw the expression he could not disguise.

"Why, papa! wha *is* the matter?" questioned Mary, now thoroughly alarmed. "Tell me at once. I cannot endure this suspense. Surely, it is not right that you should have any sorrow, and keep it from me."

The general drew her to him, and kissing her tenderly, said: "How can I tell you! How can I bring sorrow upon you, my daughter?"

Mary gazed at her father in utter amazement. What could it mean? It must be something dreadful if it could affect her self-contained father like this. This was no ordinary trouble. She was completely bewildered. She arose and walked away a little distance, then returned, and sitting down by her father's side, took his hand, and said:

"Papa, you should keep nothing from me that troubles you. I can bear anything. I am young and strong. There is but one thing I think I could not bear, and that is to lose you. While I have you, all else is secondary. Now, tell me everything. See, I am composed, and can hear what it is."

What an effort it required on the part of the general to tell her! Mary felt that it was no common trouble, and had braced herself to hear the worst. But her look of astonishment and surprise deepened, as he went on. At first she was appalled, as her mind gradually took in the significance of the situation; but she well knew that her father had suffered in keeping this to himself for so long, and she felt what an awful calamity it was to him. She knew he was suffering agonies on her account, and she determined then and there, that she would be brave and not add to his already terrible burden. At last, the general had told her all, and sat silent, waiting for her to speak.

She twined her arms about his neck, and putting her cheek against his, said:

"And you have been carrying this burden for over a year, and did not tell me, that I might have borne it with you. I almost think you have been cruel to me. Did you suppose I was so weak that I could not help you bear your trouble? I have you, and you have me. It might be worse."

Her father was too deeply moved to speak. This darling girl! Never had she been so dear. To be deprived of Mabelthorp! He could not think what existence away from Mabelthorp would mean. He neither had known nor had dreamed of any other home. Still he thought that he, but not Mary, could endure the loss.

Finally, they both talked it over together, the general telling Mary of the many places he had gone to try to obtain the money, and other facts in regard to this trouble.

When it came to finance, the general was not much more of an adept than his daughter.

At last, Mary, rising, said, as she kissed her father affectionately: "I am going to my room to think. You do the same. Perhaps we may see our way out of this yet," and entering the house, she went directly to her room.

She shut and locked the door. Thus shut in alone, she walked up and down the room. Leave Mabelthorp! Mabelthorp pass into the hands of strangers! Yet, what was to be done? Her father had told her how every one to whom he had applied had disappointed him, how so many of his friends who might aid him were either tied up through the late financial troubles, or were absent from the city. Two of his wealthiest and most devoted friends were traveling in Europe.

Mary was so crushed by the blow that it seemed impossible for her to think. She threw herself in a chair, and sat staring blankly before her. Suddenly she saw, in her mind, the words as if written in fire: "All things are possible to him that believeth." "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." "According to your faith ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "No good thing shall be withheld from them that walk uprightly."

Suddenly the awful burden seemed to slip away, and she exclaimed with glowing cheeks: "How could I forget *His* promises? I *know* they are *true,* and that He will redeem every one of them. She concentrated her thoughts for a few moments, drinking in the deep significance of these promises; then, springing up, she went down to find her father.

He was on the lawn, and had just been telling the servants of the impending calamity so that they might be prepared for the worst,. Mary could see how shocked and grieved they were. They were not like ordinary servants. They all felt that Mabelthorp was home to them, and they took as much interest and pride in the place as if it belonged to them.

Mary went into the library, and waited for her father. He soon came in, and it seemed to her that he had aged in the last hour. She went forward to meet him, and said, with a bright, happy laugh, and a radiant face:

"Now, papa, you must come right here and sit down and stop worrying. Fretting won't do any good. On the contrary, it will do a lot of harm. If you look like that, you will frighten away all the good fairies."

All this she said playfully, and taking his hat and tossing it on the table, she pushed him into a big, comfortable chair, and sat down on the arm of it. She began

running her fingers through his hair and pushing back the damp, gray curls from his forehead. He rested his head against the back of the chair and closed his eyes.

One of Mary's greatest fascinations was her low, sweet voice, every note of which was perfect melody. This she inherited from her mother, and, as she spoke to him now, he was thrilled with the sound of it. It brought back the wife he loved, and Mary looked so like her mother who had been beautiful and fascinating. And this precious daughter! He loved her so, she was so wound around his heart that seemed breaking with trouble. He opened his eyes and looked at her. She was gazing at him adoringly. He clasped her hand in his, and said with quivering lips:

"It is good in you, my daughter, to make this great effort on my account. I appreciate it. I feared you would not have the strength to bear it."

"Of course I can bear anything with you, papa. But what cheers and comforts me is this: The Bible plainly says, 'that no good thing shall be withheld from them that walk uprightly.' Now, that is one of His promises. We came by this property honestly. It was taken directly, as it were, a gift from God. It was not obtained through usury. When our ancestors took it, it was just as God had made it and pronounced it good. It was purchased by a draft on nature. There is no stain of sweat nor blood upon it, and you have always walked uprightly. Then, if we ask to keep our own, and believe in Him, shall we not retain our home? I *know* we shall. I am not going to worry. We will do all we can, and then leave the result in His hands. So, papa, dear, cheer up. Believe me, all will yet go well." And Mary began to bustle about the room in a cheery manner, and catching up her hat, she said, as she kissed him: "I am going now, to

cut some fresh rose for the vases," and humming a little tune, she vanished from his sight.

The general sat, where his daughter had left him, lost in thought. It was the first time he had ever heard her express herself from a religious standpoint, and he was very much surprised. The atmosphere of Mabelthorp was reverential and religious; but there was nothing compulsory in it. Mary had been confirmed and gone to church all her life; but even when there were hot religious controversies among the guests of Mabelthorp, which often happened, as its doors were always open to all sects, Mary never took part in them, although she listened with apparent interest. She was always willing to express her opinion on almost any other subject, but she never talked on religion. The wonder of the general deepened as he thought of it. Had something new come over her? She had not stayed to discuss the matter, but, asserting her convictions, she fled, as if nothing more could be said on the subject. Her assertion that she should leave the result in God's hands, urging her father to do likewise, was childlike. It was so sincere and trusting. It was said as confidently as if she had come to him and said: "Here is an apple higher up on this tree than I can reach. *You* can reach it. Give it to me," knowing he would do so.

His daughter's implicit trust in the Great Unknown was something new to him. It was very beautiful, but childlike. As this last thought came into his mind, another followed: "Unless you become as a little child ——"

He got no further in the quotation, for his thought went back to his daughter. "Yes, she has become as a little child," he murmured, and all day long, and for days afterward, there was that measured beat and repetition in his mind—"Unless you become as a little child—

Unless you become as a little child." He could not put it away from him.

It was on Thursday that he had this conversation with Mary, and at noon, on the same day, a telegram came, saying that Charles had just reached New York, and would be at Mabelthorp that evening.

The noon mail also had arrived, and Mary saw, by the look on her father's face, that he had received additional disappointments. But while her heart ached for him, she positively had no fear. She had no hope, whatever, that Charles would be able to help them, for she knew that he had comparatively nothing, and in marrying him, she was trusting entirely to his energy for the future. Since the death of Hugh, it had been the intention that they—Mary and Charles—should remain with her father at Mabelthorp, and Charles intended establishing himself in his profession in Clinton. Therefore, at the present moment, there was no one to whom they could look for assistance. And yet she felt sure it would come.

The hour approached when the arrival of Charles at Mabelthorp was expected, and she felt that she could not have this first night of his home-coming marred by business troubles. Her father had hinted that the wedding they had planned, and which was to take place at Mabelthorp, with great festivities, would now have to be postponed. Mary said nothing, but she felt confident that all would be well.

Going up to her father, who was pacing up and down the room, she slipped her hand into his arm and walked with him, and they chatted about the home-coming of Charles. The general read what was in his daughter's mind, and he said:

"We will say nothing of our troubles to him to-night.

L. of C.

To-morrow we will talk it over, and consult him as to what is the best course to pursue."

Mary held up her face for a kiss; then she went out to find the housekeeper to give her some directions about dinner. Every eye she met showed traces of weeping, but she appeared to take no notice of it. She was so bright and cheerful that the servants caught the inspiration. They felt she must be making a great effort to be so cheery. Never had she been so dear to all of them as at this moment, and they determined, one and all, to do their best.

Mary walked back through the great wide hall out on the veranda. Every corner in the house, every spot on the grounds, had its association, and suggested the past.

Many of these old houses become solemn and ghostly with the passing of the years. Not so with Mabelthorp. There were no shadows nor dark corners about it, no haunted chambers with creepy stories. Everything was sunshine within as well as without. Every servant understood the unwritten law of the old manor-house, and put out a hand to help the unfortunate. Daily it was demonstrated that, although high in the social scale, the owners of Mabelthorp had not lived in vain.

Mary stood gazing over the lawn to the river and hills beyond. Never had the view seemed so entrancingly beautiful. Never had Mabelthorp been so dear to her as at this moment. How perfect the day, how sweet the air! The birds were having an opera, the clouds were sailing lazily, the leaves on the trees were waving and whispering in the sleepy breeze. It was perfect—just such a day as she would have chosen for the home-coming of her beloved. How often she, Charles and Hugh had wandered about the old grounds. He knew the place so well. "It will be a home-coming for him, indeed," thought she.

She went into the library, and sinking into a large, easy chair, was soon lost in a reverie. It almost seemed to her that she could hear the laughter and gayety of those now long gone to rest. She had been told and had read of the festivities in this old house, when the very air was laden with laughter, when all wore their finest and looked their best. There had been toasts to the bravery of the men and to the beauty of the women. The house had blazed with light, and music had poured forth to the beat of merry feet.

The brasses of the fireplaces and the great, brass door-knobs were the original ones, as were the massive mahogany tables. A tall, oriental cabinet of unique workmanship, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, that stood at the further end of the room, was packed with treasures.

Mary arose, and going over to it, she pulled open one of the drawers. It was filled with dainty linen, beautifully marked by fingers, long mouldered to dust. Some of these pieces were heirlooms of generations. She closed the drawer and opened another, and lifted from it a pair of dainty satin slippers, yellow with age. They had belonged to handsome, gay, rollicking, laughing Dollie Adams. There was a handkerchief marked *Martha Curtis,* also a riding-glove of Washington's, and a spur of Lafayette's. She replaced them. No use to look further; the cabinet was full, and she knew by heart the history of each thing in it. She passed into the picture-gallery. There were fine portraits of high-stepping dames and of ancestors with wondrous white wigs, velvet coats and silk stockings, and gold knee-buckles. One by one, they had gone to rest, each leaving his imprint on his country and his home. But, loveliest among the lovely, was Mary's mother. When she had come to Mabelthorp, her beauty was the theme of every admiring tongue. She

was brought from Virginia by this tall, dignified, scholarly man, General Starkweather, whom she adored. Tall, majestic, queenly, her every movement perfect grace; she was of good lineage, and her proud blood burned in her cheek and eye. She was without a rival, a peerless beauty. Adulation spoiled her not. Years rolled on. Three times had the young bride become a mother, and the roses were still deep on her cheek when she passed away.

On a table, under this portrait, fresh flowers always bloomed. Now, a great pot of red azalias scattered their petals on the floor. Mary had not been so young as to be unconscious of her loss, when her mother passed away, and her eyes were blinded with tears as she turned from the portrait.

The general had returned with Charles, whom he had gone to meet, and they alighted from the carriage at the gateway, and walked up the drive to the house. The young man was about six feet tall, and straight as a poplar. He had brown hair and deep blue eyes. It was plain to see that he was possessed of the best American manhood. He looked, so to speak, as one "dyed in the wool." He was physically strong. His whole manner was full of daring and power, and to look at him was to feel safe to predict that somehow, somewhere, this young man would make himself heard. He was twenty-six years old. He was large-hearted, loyal and true. His sunny heart pulsated in his finger-tips when he clasped one's hand.

Mary saw them coming, and went out on the veranda to meet them. She was already famed for her beauty, and now, she was surpassingly lovely. The wind was in her gold-tinted hair, and swept her light, airy costume until a faint tracing of the outline of her limbs could be seen. Charles sprang up the steps. Her pure face,

exquisite as a rare piece of china, was lifted toward him. A happy light shone from her eyes. He caught her in his arms, holding her in a close embrace as if he would never let her go. A silent moment, and then he murmured: "My love, my love!" and stooped and kissed her. In all her life, Mary never forgot that meeting. The general looked at them until his eyes were blinded with tears. Then he turned and walked away.

Mary led Charles into the house. How happy he was! All the servants knew him, and one and all came trooping in to clasp his hand and welcome him home. Charles had a kind word and a gift for each one. Not one had been forgotten. Even with the impending doom hanging over Mabelthorp it was a joyful time. The general almost forgot his sorrow in the happy faces and glad laughter of his children. It almost seemed as if Hugh had come back to life again.

Mabelthorp was an ideal resort for lovers. Twilight was just coming on when Mary and Charles started for a stroll about the grounds. They wended their way to their favorite spot—a little glen through which flowed a diminutive stream that rested its head in a gorge, where a number of crystal springs gushed forth, and from which it drew its life. Down through the glen it went until it reached less confined surroundings. Then it sprawled over its pebbly bed until it lost itself in the river. The glen was perfectly wild. An exquisite taste had left it just as Nature had made it, and it was here the winter frowned lightly, and the south wind wafted its most refreshing breezes. The turf was thick and soft, the banks were fringed with long, feathery grasses and ferns, and crowded with wild-flowers. The place was shaded by tall shrubs, birch and alder trees, and was full of fragrance and romance. It was a little paradise. Rustic seats were

in the shadiest and coolest spots. It was a favorite resort for lovers and students, young or old.

Mary and Charles had wandered from nook to nook in this enchanting spot. The silvery moon had risen. They had talked much, and now they were silent. They were standing on a little rustic bridge that spanned the pebbly brook, and were listening to the murmur of the water. The flower-laden air, the silence, the spiritual beauty of his loved one, all seemed so perfect to Charles. The outside world, the roar of London, were so far away. He felt that this meeting with Mary was the most precious episode of his life. He loved her so, and he had looked forward with joy to the fast approaching time when they would be forever united.

"My adored one," he murmured, as he bent down and kissed her, "how I have longed to be here, and now, it seems as if it must be a dream too beautiful to last. I feel that my happiness is complete, as if I had a foretaste of heaven." Again he stooped and kissed her.

Mary felt his love and was silent. How his kisses electrified her! What rapture was hidden in the tones of his voice and in the pressure of his arms as her head nestled on his breast. She loved him so. She trusted him so. She felt his honor and truth. His fervent love thrilled her to her finger-tips, and she seemed to melt into an ecstasy of rapture in his arms.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GENERAL TELLS CHARLES OF THE MORTGAGE.

THE next morning, after breakfast, General Starkweather took Charles to the library, and there revealed to him the true state of his affairs. Charles was more than astonished at the disclosure. That the general could be financially embarrassed had never occurred to him. To be just to Charles, he never thought of how their loss might affect him. He thought only of Mary and her father, and of what life would be to both of them if deprived of Mabelthorp. When the general suggested that the wedding would have to be postponed, for the time being, his heart throbbed triumphantly as he thought of his strength, and felt in his inmost soul that he could strive gallantly for the woman he loved, and for those she loved. He really felt a thrill of joy that to him would be given the task of providing a home for her. In the glow of his joy he was conscious, as never before, that his nerves were as steel, the muscles of his hands as iron, and that he could go out into the world and battle for his love, as did the warrior knights of old. Something of this he told the general, who, rising, clasped his hand, and said with much feeling:

"I now feel I have a son indeed. As to the wedding, that will be an after consideration."

"Yes; *now* we must think if there is not some way to extricate you from this dilemma," replied Charles, springing up. "But only think! To-morrow is the last day of grace—only twenty-four hours. I feel there is no time to lose, yet I don't know which way to turn."

Charles had been gone from America for three years, and he knew of but two persons that under any circumstances could pay the amount of money required, on short notice like this. One of these was a very rich maiden aunt; the other was a wealthy Californian, who had just returned from abroad on the same ship with Charles, and who did not know what he would do until after reading his mail awaiting him in New York. Therefore, it was uncertain whether he was yet in New York, or whether he had left for the West. Charles's aunt was out of the question, as she was cruising with friends in the Mediterranean.

He determined to go to New York at once, and endeavor to find his Californian friend. In the meantime, he advised the general to appeal to Solmon for a week's extension of time. He was so earnest, so strong, that he inspired General Starkweather with hope. The thought of appealing to Solmon had not occurred to the general, and he decided to follow that suggestion at once.

They soon hurried away, the younger man to the city, and the older to see what could be done with Solmon.

Mary came out on the veranda to bid them good-by, her face sunny as usual. She kissed her father, then turned to Charles. How strong he seemed as he took her in his arms, and kissing her, said tenderly:

"Nothing can crush the life out of our love, dear. Be

of good cheer. If the worst comes to the worst, we three have one another."

"I am not afraid. With you two I have no fear," was all she said as she returned his caress.

But the filial love he already gave her father touched her deeply, and brought the tears streaming from her eyes as she watched them drive away.

Her father did not return until late in the afternoon. He had waited all day to see Solmon, who was out of town, and had failed, even then, to meet him. He now had no hope from either of his brokers. Late in the evening a telegram came from Charles. He had not found his friend, and he would not be down to Mabelthorp until morning.

That night Charles wrote a long letter to Mary, knowing it would reach her by eight o'clock the next morning. In it he told her he would not be at Mabelthorp until ten o'clock the next day. He wrote everything he could to arouse her to a sense of the situation, at the same time assuring her of his undying devotion and of the best energies of his life for her. He was dreadfully worried. He did not fear work, and he felt he could die for the woman he loved; but it was impossible for him to give her such a home as Mabelthorp. He felt she did not appreciate the situation, and would not until everything was gone. Then he feared the reaction. She seemed so calm, so tranquil. She had been so happy the night before that had it not been for the assurance of her father, he could not have believed she was aware of the impending calamity.

* * * * * * * *

We will now ask the reader to go back with us to the night of the party in Clinton.

Sidney had heard the remarks of the gossips; looking

down at Mary, he had seen from her rising color that she, too, had heard them. He had felt her hand tremble on his arm and had seen her embarrassment as she bade him good-night. It only confirmed him in his belief that Mary was in love with him. Besides, he had noticed, when they were dancing, how all eyes were turned admiringly upon them. After Mary had gone, several persons had joked him about her, and had laughingly asked, "When is it to be?"

He felt exultant that others should notice Mary's manner as well as himself. He had hoped, day by day, that the general would apply to him for assistance. It would have been so easy, then, for him to ask for Mary's hand. He could not understand it, but concluded, knowing the pride of the Starkweathers, that the remembrance of the episode of three years previous, was the cause of the present hesitancy.

Through his spies, he learned that Charles Thornton had returned from abroad, and was at Mabelthorp. However, that did not trouble him, for he happened to know that young Thornton had no money. Nevertheless, when Charles went to New York, he was under espionage.

Sidney was so sure of the success of all his schemes, that already he had begun to plan many changes and improvements in Mabelthorp. He had worked so slowly, so carefully, he felt sure he could not fail. He had had Mary so strictly watched, and he knew that of all her admirers he was the only one that could call a blush to her cheek, or make her tremble. Very soon he would be master of Mabelthorp, and in a position to launch himself politically. He cared for Mary simply for her influence, and only for the hour, just as he cared for Mrs. Multon. Had it been in his power, he would have turned Mabelthorp into a harem.

When Saturday morning arrived, his plans were complete. He dressed himself with the greatest care. His mother was to go after Mrs. Multon and bring her home. He had given her the most minute instructions how to manage the whole affair, and he felt it quite safe to leave Mrs. Multon in her hands. He would go to Mabelthorp and arrange matters there. He had the checks all made out for the general.

He ate his breakfast in a wonderfully complacent mood. His spies all had reported the night before, that all was well—all "going his way!" He saw his mother off on her errand, and was sitting, waiting for the light buggy to be brought around in which he intended driving to Mabelthorp. He took up the New York *Herald*. What was it that suddenly riveted his eyes to the paper, and made him sick and faint and deadly pale?

Again the morning paper had been the messenger that blasted his hopes. It contained the announcement of the betrothal of Mary and Charles, and also stated that the wedding would follow within the month. It would take place at Mabelthorp, and it was to be celebrated in a brilliant manner. There were fine pictures of Mary and Charles, with a long account of the beauty and accomplishments of the prospective bride, and a eulogy on the nobleness, the honor, and the integrity of Charles. Then followed the pedigrees of each, and a long account of the history, glows, and glories, and beauties of Mabelthorp, with magnificent illustrations of the manor-house, inside and out. The whole description covered two pages of the *Herald*.

Sidney tore the paper into a thousand shreds. *She* to marry that beggar—that pauper! How had it happened that he never had heard Hugh mention his name, and that he had not heard that Mary had met Charles while abroad?

"Oh, it is too much, too much! Curse her! Curse them all!" he exclaimed, as he kicked over a chair and staggered about the room like a drunken man, venting his wrath on whatever came in his way, and nearly killing a poor little dog that happened to be in the room.

Again he exclaimed to himself: "The wedding to be celebrated at *Mabelthorp!*" He laughed like a fiend. "Not much! I can stop that at least. My money will speak in that matter, I guess. I'll have the infernal estate in my hands before another day; and I'll have every tree on the place cut down. Not one shall be left standing. I will demolish the house. Not a stick nor a stone shall be left. Let it once come into *my* hands, and its history shall be but a memory."

He strode out to the buggy, leaped into it, nearly knocking down the groom, and cruelly lashing the poor horse, tore around to Solmon's, where he gave orders that no mercy should be shown the general.

Solmon, himself, did not like the proud Starkweathers; but he might have shown some mercy had he not been temporarily in the hands of Sidney, to whom he was obliged to yield, or lose a large sum of money.

Sidney then drove home to find that his mother had returned without Mrs. Multon, and to learn that all the old woman knew about her was that she had gone away in the direction of Mabelthorp, and she presumed she had gone to Miss Starkweather for assistance.

"Curse them all! Must they ever come between me and my desire? I'll not be thwarted in this. I'll have her if I take her by force!"

He started out, and drove directly in the opposite direction from Mabelthorp—drove at a reckless speed until he had expended some of his wrath. Then he turned toward

Mabelthorp by a roundabout course. When he reached there, he saw Solmon's buggy, and said to himself:

"Aha! the fun has begun. I'll find my lady in tears, I fancy, and it won't be hard work to get the woman. Just wait till I have her in my power. I'll have a beautiful slave—see if I don't!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A STRANGE MARRIAGE.

AFTER her father and Dr. Malridge had gone, Mary entered the house and stood at the window. She was expecting Charles. She saw the doctor drive away and her father disappear. She saw Malcolm sitting under a tree, evidently trying to decipher a letter. She felt a little weary, and turning, she passed from object to object in the room, touching them tenderly. She sighed: "Only a little while longer in the dear old home. How can I leave here, where I was born, and where my mother lived and died—where each niche and corner has some beloved association; where each bird and squirrel is my friend; and where Charles——"

She could contain herself no longer; but flinging herself on the sofa, she gave way to the utmost extreme of grief, and sobbed as if her heart would break. Suddenly she sprang up, and dashing away the tears, exclaimed aloud:

"Oh, my! What am I doing? Tears, tears! What has become of all my cherished beliefs? There, there!" as she determinedly dried her eyes, "not another tear, positively! There will be time enough to cry when all else fails. Until

then, I am going to laugh;" and she caught up her hat, laughing softly to herself, and was just passing out on the veranda, when she saw Charles coming toward the house. At this moment, his naturally optimistic face was clouded with anxiety; but his expression changed to one of surprise and tenderness, as he beheld the smiling, radiant face of the fair young girl, who now came forward, giving him both hands in cordial, winsome greeting, as she exclaimed:

"Oh, Charles! Is it really you? I am so glad you have come! Isn't this a glorious morning? Come into the house and give an account of yourself."

Charles took both her hands in his, and stood gazing at her for a moment, and then said: "I don't know what to make of you."

"Why?" said Mary, tipping her head to one side and looking at him quizzically.

"Mary, dear, your face is actually shining. One would almost think you were happy."

"Well," said Mary, sinking down on the arm of a chair and lightly swinging her hat in a playful manner, "I am not unhappy."

Charles gave a little sigh of relief, as he replied: "Of course I would rather hear you laugh than see you cry; but I can't—I positively can't see how you can do it." He began pacing up and down the room disconsolately.

Mary laughed softly, saying, "You must excuse me for laughing, Charles, but you really ought to see the expression on your face. It is positively dolorous."

"How can I help it?" he answered, as he stopped walking, and stood before her. "Now I don't want to make you wretched, but, my darling, do you realize," reaching out and taking her hand in his and speaking with great seriousness, "that in a few hours this house will have passed out of your father's hands, and it will be to you a home no

longer?" And, as he said this, there was positive anguish in his voice. For he very much feared that this woman, who was dearer to him than life itself, did not wholly appreciate the gravity of the calamity that was about to befall her. He felt that his letter had failed in its mission.

Mary had arisen, and was standing, looking at the troubled face of her lover. She was, at that moment, a vision of loveliness and womanly purity. There was nothing sad nor dreamy in her glorious blue eyes, nor did she have the look of one whose thoughts were far away. On the contrary, she was thoroughly alive to the present, and very serious. Yet, the sunshine itself was not brighter than her smile, as she looked up into the eyes of her proud, handsome lover, and said:

"Charles, dear, I *do* realize it. I know that in a few hours, nay, almost any moment, Mr. Solmon will be here to foreclose the mortgage he holds on dear old Mabelthorp. I realize that if the money is not paid that papa and I will have to go out into the world without a dollar. I also know that all this would have been averted by the truest, best, and noblest man on earth, your own dear self, had it been possible. I realize, too, that our wedding that was to take place this month, has been indefinitely postponed. I realize it all—all," sighed Mary as she turned away.

"And yet you smile! I actually heard you laughing when I entered the house a few moments ago."

"Well," responded Mary, turning suddenly, and speaking in a bantering manner, "would you have been better satisfied if you had found me with red eyes and nose from weeping?" Then, as Charles was about to reply, she put up her hands to signify she wished to be heard, and continued in a decided manner:

"Now, listen to me, Charles. I am not going to cry until I am obliged to. I believe if we are compelled to leave this place, we will find something to eat and something to wear. What does the Bible say?" she asked laughingly. "'Feed my lambs.' That's myself. 'Feed my sheep.' That's you."

Charles laughed a little, in spite of himself, as he said: "Well, I like that—being called a sheep;" then all his anxiety returning, he added: "But really, Mary, this is a very serious matter."

"Oh, well, then," said Mary brightly, the soft love-light coming in her eyes, "in all seriousness, I am not discouraged. You know Silas and Saul of Tarsus? Well, they were bound hand and foot, and were in prison. Now, what did they do?"

"I don't know. What did they do?" wonderingly asked Charles, trying to guess what Silas and Saul of Tarsus had to do with their present trouble.

"Did they cry and moan? Oh, no! They sang and gave praise, and the walls tumbled about them, and they were set free. So *I'm* going to sing and praise, and I'm sure *my* walls will tumble down, and I will be free. Dear Charlie, I thought you were a good Churchman. Why don't you ask for help out of this trouble?"

She said all this in a bright, cheery voice, and coming up to him, as she asked the question, she gave him a soul-glancing smile that sent an electric thrill to the tips of her lover's fingers. He gave her a look of intense fondness, such as could come into his eyes for no other woman in the world, as he took her hand, and placing his arm about her waist, he led her to a sofa, and seated himself beside her. Then he said tenderly:

"My loved one, I know what it will mean to you and your father to give up Mabelthorp. The thought of it

on his account seems so dreadful. If only I had known this earlier, something might have been done; or, if we only had a little more time. It has almost driven me wild, and I have prayed, oh, so sincerely, that God would spare you this, and I have hoped my prayers would have been answered. But the time is so short. I fear we will have to face the worst."

"Excuse me for laughing," said Mary, "but I can't help it. How little you trust this God of yours! Now, if your father were living, and had plenty of money, and you should ask for enough to make you comfortable, do you think he would refuse to give it to you?"

"Certainly not."

"Well, why not trust your Heavenly Father, also? The Bible plainly says: 'All things whatsoever ye ask in my name shall be done unto you.' Now, I have asked in His name, to keep the dear old place, that papa may end his days here, and I believe I shall, in some way, receive what I have asked for. I *believe,* not hope, not think—I *know* that in some way, we shall be set free. I shall rest in this belief, come what may," said Mary, rising.

But at this moment the sound of Trixey's voice came to Mary, saying to some one: "You will find Miss Mary in the drawing-room."

"All right, Trixey, I'll find her," came the response.

Mary recognized Colonel Eversoll's voice, and the next instant he appeared in the doorway. He had the vigor, the dash, the full blood of a man in his prime. His every movement showed him to be alive with courage, hope and confidence.

He came forward hurriedly, and shaking hands with Mary and Charles, he said, without waiting to be seated:

"Ah, my dear Miss Starkweather, I am so glad to find you home this morning. I have come to you in the greatest

dilemma, and, as I have no time for preliminary talk, I will state my business at once. You know Harry Drummond, nephew of old Ralph Burbank?"

"Harry Drummond? Of course I remember him."

"I should say we *do* remember him," echoed Charles.

"Well," continued the colonel, "when his old uncle died, three years ago, he made a will to the effect that if Harry, who was then abroad, returned to America and married an American girl, and took his uncle's name, before the expiration of three years, all of his property was to go to Harry. But if he did not, it was to go to charity. I have tried in my many letters to Harry, to give him a hint to come home; but he did not take it. And my instructions from his uncle were such that I dared not ask him outright to come, or to influence him, for his uncle said that if love of America did not cause Harry to return, he could go penniless so far as he was concerned. Now, the will expires to the minute of the three years; and to-day, at twelve o'clock, the time is up. And about an hour ago, in walked Harry. When I read him the conditions of the will, he was aghast. I don't think he ever has thought of marriage in his life. It was a piece of idiotic eccentricity in the old man to make such conditions. However, to make a long story short, Harry is willing to fulfill the conditions of the will, if he can find a girl to have him. But there is where the trouble comes in," excitedly continued the colonel. "He has been away from America so long that he knows no one, and then again, the time is so short. I am a stuffy lawyer, and know so few girls. However, he has gone to get a marriage license, and I have started out to find him a wife."

During this hurried recital, Mary and Charles listened with widening eyes, and when the colonel ended by his declaration of being out on the hunt for a wife, they both

broke into merry peals of laughter. The colonel stood and looked at them a minute, and then said:

"By George! It may be funny to you, but it's a consideration of millions to Harry, and it's no laughing matter."

"Well, what are you going to do?" asked Mary.

"Do!" exclaimed the colonel. "Why, I've come to you."

"Me!" exclaimed Mary; and again her merry laugh rang out. "I am sorry, but I can't accommodate you."

"No," said Charles, going to Mary and taking her hand and putting his arm around her waist, "I'm very sorry, but *we* can't accommodate you. Now, do you see, Colonel?"

"Well, yes. I rather think I do," answered the perplexed colonel, a light breaking in upon him.

"But here comes papa; perhaps he can help you!" exclaimed Mary.

The colonel turned, and caught the general by the hand, and explained the situation, saying, "Something must be done."

"This is hard on Harry," said the general.

"Of course it is," responded the colonel. "He is a good fellow, his only fault being his roving disposition. In that I can fully recommend him. He has been four years trying to decide which he likes better: the City of Fogs or the City of Frogs, and not being able to come to a decision, he has returned to his first love, America, and is willing to kiss the feet of the Goddess of Liberty, Miss Hail Columbia, or any other blooming maiden that will help him out of his present dilemma. I told him to meet me here." The colonel glanced out of the window, and exclaiming, "By Jove! there he is now," he hurried out to meet Harry, who exclaimed excitedly:

"I've got it, I've got it. There! take it," thrusting a paper into the colonel's hands. "Where is she?"

"'Take it, take it!' 'Where is she?' What are you talking about? What do you mean?"

"The marriage license and the woman—the girl—the female I am going to marry. Where is she? Have you found her?" questioned the excited Harry.

"No, I haven't found her," replied the colonel. "Have you lost your wits?"

"But we must find some one. I don't care who it is!" exclaimed Harry, pulling out his watch and consulting it. "Just think! I have only one hour and a half."

"Come," said the colonel, as he pulled him into the room, "you have not greeted your old friends."

Charles and General Starkweather came forward to meet Harry, warmly greeting him.

"Ah!" said the general, "I am glad to welcome the wanderer back to his native shores."

"You have not forgotten little Mary, have you?" said the colonel, turning to Mary.

"Mary? Can it be possible!" said Harry, taking her hand, and gazing with unconcealed admiration on the radiantly beautiful girl before him. "Mary grown into such a lovely woman!" Then, dropping her hand, he turned to the colonel. "Perhaps *she* will——"

"Oh, no, she won't! She is not in the market," replied the colonel.

"I am sorry for you," said Charles to Harry. "The colonel has just been telling us of the pickle you're in. I wish we could help you out."

"Yes," said Mary laughingly, "I wish we had a dozen pretty girls here for you to choose from."

Harry was a great favorite.

"Come, now, Miss Mary, you must know some one. Do

help me out,' begged Harry, again looking at his watch. "I have only an hour and a quarter. I don't care *who* she is." But as he caught the surprised look on Mary's face, he added: "I mean so long as she is an American, and—white. She need never live with me a minute. In fact, I would rather she wouldn't. I will support her all her life, and she can be as free as air."

"A great inducement, surely; but even on those liberal terms I don't think you can find a wife here—at least, not on such short notice," said the general.

"Can't I marry your maid?" asked Harry," turning to Mary.

"She's French," laughed Mary.

"Your cook, then?" said Harry desperately.

"Irish," laconically replied the general.

Charles came forward, and Harry exclaimed: "Your laundress, Charlie! What's the matter with her?"

"She's a Chinaman," replied Charles.

"Great Scott! What shall I do?" groaned Harry, invoking an American deity, as he collapsed into a chair.

Mary crossed the room, and said to the colonel in a low voice: "Colonel, I have an idea." And then, in as few words as possible, she told him of Mrs. Multon and her friendless situation; of the delicate condition of both mother and child; a sickly babe on her hands.

"Do you suppose it would be possible to get her to marry Harry? She is a lady, I am positive. And she is suffering so. She is now in the house. Harry has promised he will support and never trouble the woman who marries him. If you wish it, I will take you to Mrs. Multon?"

"An excellent suggestion," replied the delighted colonel. "It certainly is worth the trial, at any rate." And going over to Harry, he slapped him on the back, exclaiming: "Cheer up, my boy! All is not lost. We've still another

chance left, which, if it fails, I'll marry you myself!—yes, damn it, I'll marry you myself!" was the colonel's parting declaration as he laughingly quitted the room.

Mary presented Colonel Eversoll to Mrs. Multon, and said, as she took her hand and gazed into her great, mournful, black eyes:

"Colonel Eversoll will explain his business. Use your own judgment in the matter, and remember, you have my sympathy, no matter what your decision may be. I cannot advise you in this, Mrs. Multon. I will only say that the man whom Colonel Eversoll will speak to you about, is a gentleman. I will vouch for that. And he will do whatever he agrees to do."

Then she withdrew, leaving the colonel alone with Mrs. Multon; and he, in the fewest words possible, made known the situation, ending by urging her, for her own and her child's sake, to become the wife of Mr. Drummond, assuring her that she need not fear his ever troubling her, and that she would be amply provided for.

The poor little woman was overcome with surprise, and almost horror at the suggestion.

"I cannot, indeed I cannot, Colonel Eversoll!" she exclaimed.

"For your child's sake," said he, going to the little one, and tenderly lifting the frail babe in his arms. "See how pale and delicate it is. Think of what I propose. It means for your babe, food, clothing, care, without which it cannot live."

She started as if stung by his words. "Cannot live! Oh, Colonel Eversoll, do not say that!" wailed the stricken mother.

"It is true," said the colonel, gently replacing the little one on the couch. "Your child has the frailest hold on

life, and needs every care. You now have it in your power to give her this."

"Die! My little blossom!" moaned the mother, going to the couch and gazing with unutterable anguish on the face of her child.

There was a moment's hesitation. It seemed as if one could almost see the throbs of her lacerated heart. The repugnance at the thought of selling herself was horrible.

"Die!" she repeated. "And I can save her by this sacrifice."

Still irresolute, her mind drifted to Mary, that lovely girl, who even though she was about to be turned from her home, gave her the tenderest sympathy. Then, as a spasm of pain passed over the little face, on which she was gazing, and as the remembrance of the colonel's words came back, she turned to him, and said hastily:

"This man is rich, you say, very rich?"

"He is very wealthy and is able to give you whatever you may require," said the colonel.

Then, with quickly summoned resolution and firmness, she said: "I will do what you ask. I will marry this man; but on one condition only: that I shall not see his face, nor he mine; that he will never claim me after the ceremony; that I can leave here immediately."

"Everything shall be just as you wish," said the delighted colonel.

"Then, the quicker, the better," said Mrs. Multon, "else I may not have the courage to go on."

When the colonel left the room, she seated herself at a small desk and commenced to write rapidly.

When Colonel Eversoll and Mary left the parlor, General Starkweather stood near the window, for a few minutes, forgetting Harry's trouble in the immensity of his

own deplorable situation. He had not even confided his trouble to his old friend, Colonel Eversoll, who had but just come, to rest and recuperate for a few days, at Clinton, where he still kept his summer home, after a long and most wearing law case that he had just won.

The colonel was not a rich man; and the general knew that should he become aware of the situation, he would be sorely distressed could he not aid his old friend. Therefore, he determined not to tell him; but it required all the nerve he possessed to be agreeable in the face of the impending crisis.

Going into the hall, he met Mary, who informed him of the colonel's efforts to persuade Mrs. Multon to become Harry's wife. And slipping her hand into her father's arm, they walked out on the veranda, where, the general glancing down the road, espied the carriage of Dr. Malridge.

"The very man we want!" he exclaimed. "Here, Charlie," he called, stepping to the door.

In a moment he had Charles flying down the road, in mad haste, after Dr. Malridge, whom he soon overtook, and quickly explaining that General Starkweather wanted to speak to him, he hurried the wondering doctor to the house.

Colonel Eversoll had just informed the general that Mrs. Multon had consented to marry Harry; and as he turned away he heard the general saying to Dr. Malridge:

"My dear doctor, this is really sudden, I know; but it is all right, I assure you. There are reasons why there should be no publicity to this affair, and why this marriage must be kept a secret, for the present."

"All right, General," replied Dr. Malridge. "It shall be as you say; only, if it were some one that I knew less

of than yourself, I should hesitate about performing the ceremony in this irregular manner."

The colonel informed Mary of the result of his interview, and of the conditions imposed. She immediately ordered the carriage that it might be in readiness to take Mrs. Multon to the station, and went to assist her to prepare for the ceremony.

Being left alone, Harry sat in the most dejected manner. He had a clever face; his honest gray eyes and winning smile readily found their way to the hearts of either sex. He had been brought up and educated by a bachelor uncle, his mother's only brother, and a millionaire several times over.

Harry was no cad. Still, he had been a "swell among the swells," with plenty of money. And now, to be left penniless. He could not pull himself together sufficiently to collect his thoughts and face this awful calamity. This last act of his uncle, in making conditions of this sort to his will, conditions that, at this moment, he could see no way of fulfilling, and with poverty staring him in the face, seemed appalling and he was well-nigh distraught. He was like a stranger in a strange land. He did not know which way to turn. Oh, it was too much! He felt he could not sit there, waiting, longer. He got up hastily, thinking he would go out on the road, and challenge the first woman he met to marry him. He started toward the door, and met the colonel, who exclaimed gleefully:

"It's all right, my boy! The battle's fought, the day is ours, everything is done, spick and span, in the nick of time. Saved, mentally, physically, but I fear you're lost morally," said the colonel mockingly.

"Thanks, my benefactor, my friend," said the now delighted Harry, all his good nature instantly returning.

"Don't worry about my morals. They are fireproof. But where is the lady?—I mean my wife that is to be?"

"Never you mind. You just stay right here, and Mary and I will manage this affair."

General Starkweather took Dr. Malridge to the library, saying: "After all, we have you, I think, for the rest of the day."

For the next twenty minutes, there was a great bustling to and fro.

* * * * * * * *

Malcolm, having received a most mysterious letter from a Mr. White, a lawyer in town, asking him to call at once at his office, had taken it upon himself to drive Mrs. Multon to the station, and to see Mr. White at the same time. In accordance with this arrangement, Malcolm drove around to the door, seated on the box, waiting for the lady, when Trixey came out, and, in the most mysterious manner, informed him that a wedding was about to take place in the house, a bit of news that nearly paralyzed Malcolm with astonishment. Such a rush and excitement as the past few days had been! Malcolm was very unhappy, and nothing but curiosity could have made him leave home at such a time, even to go down to the station. But he was not accustomed to getting letters from lawyers, and his curiosity got the better of him.

* * * * * * * *

When all was ready, Mary exclaimed: "What shall we do? I have a dozen veils, but not a real thick one for Mrs. Multon."

"Oh, that can easily be arranged," said the colonel; and whipping out his handkerchief, he went to Harry, and said in a tragic manner: "Behold your executioner!" And

in a trice, he had tied the handkerchief over Harry's eyes, completely blindfolding him, while Harry, though laughing and protesting, was willing enough to yield any point, in order to escape the calamity of poverty that had been staring him in the face for the past three hours.

"There!" said the colonel, as he gave a few finishing, precautionary touches to the bandage, "you are ready for the sacrifice."

"A lamb led to the slaughter," said Harry, as with the aid of the colonel, he stumbled across the hall to the library, there to take his stand and await the coming of his bride. Then he added: "This is not the first time a man has rushed blindfold into matrimony."

In a few moments Mrs. Multon was led in by Mary. She was closely veiled. She walked firmly and unhesitatingly to the side of Harry. She did not give way to any burst of agony as Mary had feared. There were neither sobs nor tears, only the responses in a low tone, as Dr. Malridge's full, sonorous voice delivered the words that made them man and wife.

Perhaps her thoughts were far away to another marriage service with the husband now gone forever.

Mary led Mrs. Multon to the door, where Trixey was awaiting her, and said:

"The carriage is at the door. Trixey will assist you to get ready."

Mary returned to the drawing-room just as Harry, being informed that Mrs. Multon was out of the room, snatched the handkerchief from his eyes, and was excitedly mopping his face with it; for to state the real fact, when it came right down to the last moment, and Harry heard the solemn words of the marriage service, an awful feeling for the thing he was doing and the possible consequences of such a mad marriage came over him. He felt

the cold perspiration starting from every pore in his body.

"There! thank heaven it's over, and I am safe, and by the skin of my teeth, too!" he exclaimed, glancing at his watch. "Ten minutes later, and all would have been lost. By Jove, Miss Starkweather! I feel like a man that has just been saved from drowning. And to think I have you and the dear old coloned to thank for it."

"No, no; not me. You can bestow all your thanks on Miss Mary," said the colonel. "But for her, you would still be a benedict and—lost."

"But, Colonel, where is she? What is she going to do now?"

"She is going away at once, after a few preliminaries are arranged,—the marriage settlements, etc., etc.," replied the colonel.

"I have done all I could to persuade her to remain a few days; but it is impossible to keep her. She insists upon going at once," said Mary, who, in her absolute faith that she would keep her home, had made no change in her regular duties, and had, in accordance with this faith, urged Mrs. Multon to take her time about leaving.

"I am glad to hear that she is going. She shows good taste, at any rate," said Harry in a relieved voice; for he was very skeptical in regard to all this blindfolding business, and was rejoiced to know that she was to take her departure at once.

"Beg pardon, but who is this person?" with slight stress upon the word *person*. And, as Mary looked inquiringly at him, without replying, he stammered: "I mean, who is this—er—ah—lady?" Still Mary looked at him without apparently understanding him, and he blurted out: "That is, who is—well, who is my wife, any way?"

"Yes, who is his wife, any way?" queried the colonel.

Mary was very much amused at Harry's efforts to avoid the word *wife,* and she laughed softly, as she replied:

"I can tell you all I know very quickly. I went, not long ago, to carry some sewing to a poor woman, who lives in the little tumble-down cottage down the road. There I found this woman and her little babe. She had taken a poorly furnished room, there, expecting to find sewing, whereby she could support herself and child. Her babe has been very ill. I sent a doctor to her, and aided her as best I could. She told me that her mother died, leaving her an orphan at fourteen years of age; that her father married again, and that her stepmother made her life so wretched, that, when she was sixteen, she became the wife of a boy schoolmate to whom she had been engaged ever since they were children. Her own father, as well as her husband's father, cast them off. But, her husband, who was a brave boy, she said, secured a position with sufficient salary to support them. All went well until the end of the year, when her husband took cold, from some exposure, and died, leaving her a penniless widow at seventeen, with this infant. Her husband has been dead but three months. She is very refined, and is a lady, I am sure; and nothing but anxiety for her child could have induced her to become your wife."

"Ah, a romance in one act," said Harry skeptically.

"This is the second act," laughed the colonel.

"I wonder how long the curtain will be down before the third act," remarked Harry.

"Oh, you need never fear her troubling you," answered Mary. "She seems to have but one thought, and that is, to get away from here without seeing you. Come, Colonel, we must see the little woman off." And Mary led the way from the room.

"Without seeing me," soliloquized Harry. "Complimentary indeed. Ha, ha, ha!" he laughed, for he was now his happy self once more. "What a glorious honeymoon I'll have. No one to find fault if I stay out late, or to abuse me if I should go on a little toot. She cannot go too quickly to suit me. Refined? Bah! I'll bet she's a regular little schemer; and all this fuss about getting away in such a hurry, is all affectation. Oh, well! I would have married the cook, laundress, or anybody sooner than give up all old Uncle Ralph's millions; and I'm obliged to this—woman, whoever she is, that has helped me out of this dilemma. She shall never have anything but good treatment from me, and money enough to live in clover the rest of her days. I'll see to that. If she will only keep her distance, it is all I'll ask of her."

But at this moment, his soliloquy was cut short, as he heard Mary's and the colonel's voice; and he knew they were escorting *his wife* to the carriage. As he glanced curiously out of the window, he got a glimpse of a closely veiled figure in a rusty black dress; and he continued his soliloquy:

"If her face is no prettier than her shabby black dress, and I don't suppose it is, she need not have been so particular about hiding it behind that hideous black veil. Gee whiz! she's starting on her wedding tour. I hope she'll enjoy it."

The colonel's voice came to him, saying: "Everything is satisfactorily arranged, I believe?"

From behind the black veil came the response: "Yes, everything."

"Well, by Jove! this is a go, surely," thought Harry. "Three hours ago, I was a rich bachelor, with, as I supposed not a care in the world—whole-hearted, fancy free. Now,

three hours after, I am a married man and father of a family. There go my wife and child, and in a few minutes more, I will be a widower, or much the same thing. Uncle Ralph always said I was a devil of a fellow, and I'll soon begin to believe it myself! At any rate, I have lived a small lifetime in the last three hours."

He took a turn in the room, and again glancing from the window, continued: "There! she is getting into the carriage, and Miss Mary is holding up the baby and kissing it. Ugh! I'm glad it isn't *I* that has to do it. Well, by George! If it didn't look straight at me and laugh. Oh, well! I'll take that laugh for a good omen. The mother's black dress has given me the shivers. Good-by, little wife and baby," waving an imaginary farewell to them. "Ta, ta, boy or girl, whichever you are. Gad! Whoever heard of a man not knowing whether his four-months-old kid was a boy or a girl!" And then, as the carriage whirled down the drive, he said: "Good-by, little hunky-punky. You and your mother have done me a good turn which I shall not forget."

He still stood at the window, and saw the general reenter the house, and go to the library. He saw Charles join Mary, and enter into an earnest conversation with her, as they disappeared in the shrubbery, a little way down the lawn. The colonel was talking to the man in charge of the light buggy in which he had driven over to Mabelthorp. Harry turned, and was about to leave the house to join the colonel, when Trixey came up to him, and in a hurried and mysterious manner, said, as she put a letter in his hand:

"Here is a letter, sir, which the lady, who has just gone, left for you. She told me to give it to you as soon as she was out of the house, and to beg of you to read it at once, and not wait a moment, as it was very important."

Harry took the letter mechanically, looking down indifferently, and apparently not in a hurry to know the contents.

Again Trixey spoke: "I am sure it is *very* important;" then left the room quickly.

"'*Very important*,' '*very* important,'" thought Harry. "I wonder what in thunder will happen next! A letter from my wife—ahem! A new sensation. Now, what in the devil has she to say to me? I suppose she will commence: 'My dear hubby-dubby.' I was in hopes she would spare me this, and transact all business with the colonel, who is my lawyer as well as my spiritual adviser. But I suppose I must pay the penalty of being a married man; and besides, a written interview is so much more easily managed than a personal one. But let me see what she has to say.

"Deuced pretty handwriting for a beggar," thought Harry, glancing carelessly at the address, as he removed the letter from the envelope. Then he read:

"'Mr. Drummond, Dear Sir:'—Ahem! very formal for a wife," thought Harry.—"'I hope you will understand that I must naturally be very much pained, owing to our peculiar relations, to ask a favor of you so soon.' I think, myself, it's a little premature," mentally commented Harry. "But I suppose this is only the beginning of what I have to expect."—"'But I trust the contents of this letter will be my apology for doing so. I have discovered that in order to save the good name of his son, General Starkweather mortgaged Mabelthorp, for the sum of fifty thousand dollars, to Mr. Solmon, the broker, who has refused to renew the mortgage. General Starkweather has made every effort to raise the money, but, so far, he has failed. To-day is the last day, and if the money is not paid, Mabelthorp passes out of his hands. I have learned all this

from Sidney Banks, who, for some reason, hates General Starkweather and his daughter; and I am confident he is working against them, and, even now, is exulting in their prospective ruin. Colonel Eversoll has told me you are rich. In God's name, save this home, if you can. Miss Starkweather has been a ministering angel to me and my babe. Mr. Solmon will show no mercy. Save them; and if the prayers of a friendless woman can be of any avail to one in your position, believe me, you shall have them until death.' "

There was no signature.

Mabelthorp in danger! Such a calamity hanging over this home, and yet, they had been helping him, and apparetly thinking only of him and his misfortune; and, even now, knowing he was rich, they had not rushed to him for assistance. Harry could hardly conceive it possible that it was true, or that such utter unselfishness could exist. But it was a time for action. And springing up, he exclaimed, as he darted into the hall for his hat:

"Pray God I may not be too late!"

Rushing down to where the colonel was standing, he unceremoniously pushed him into the buggy, and leaped in after him, saying to the servant, as he did so:

"Tell General Starkweather we will be back directly." And thrusting Mrs. Multon's letter into the colonel's hand, he lashed the horse to its utmost speed, and, in less than ten minutes, drew up before the bank in Clinton.

Mary and Charles had caught a glimpse of Harry's flying figure.

"Hello! what's up now, I wonder? There goes Drummond, running away like a March hare," said Charles.

"He seems in a great hurry," said Mary, looking after Harry. "I supposed both he and the colonel would remain for luncheon. I am so glad Dr. Malridge stayed

over." Then, as they entered the house, Mary continued: "What an eventful day this has been! I think I shall remember it the rest of my life."

"I don't think I will soon forget it, myself. I cannot understand how you and your father have managed to keep so perfectly cool, under the circumstances."

Charles was in a state of suppressed excitement. He was almost in a frenzy. If Mary had been hysterical, and in tears, there would have been something that he could have done. He could, at least, have talked to and comforted her, encouraged her father, and bade them hope. But, on the contrary, they were both perfectly self-contained. It must be confessed, though, that the general was very pale, and had a look on his face such as the martyrs must have worn, when about to be led to the stake. But Mary was really smiling. Charles looked at her. Was she doing this for her father's sake, or did she really feel it? He could not tell. Never had she been so dear to this man as she was at this moment. He felt he would gladly lay down his life to save her from this great sorrow. He felt like a child in his utter helplessness. He reluctantly concluded that they must face the worst, and that some plans should be laid, some definite form of action taken, in regard to their immediate future. Going to where Mary was standing, he said:

"Now that we are alone, shall we not speak of your own affairs? Do you know, that in a very little time, this home will be in the hands of strangers?"

"No, I don't know it. I still have faith in my God if you have not in yours. I still believe this calamity will be averted," said Mary.

"But suppose it is not; if after all, you are compelled to yield? I suppose you will then say it is all for the best, and be reconciled."

Mary turned and looked him in the face, for a moment, and then said, slowly, but positively: "No, I could not, under any circumstances, feel it was for the best. Listen to me, Charles. Years ago, I used to read the Bible and pray as you do. I prayed, *hoping* my prayers would be answered. Now, I know I did not understand the Bible.

"When I was in Boston, I became acquainted with a lady; and from her, I believe, I learned to read the Bible aright. The Book, in her hands, became a revelation to me. From her, I learned a true religion. It is a religion of perfect faith, perfect confidence, perfect love, and a common brotherhood for all living things."

"Mary, dear," said Charles, "this is very sweet and womanly; but we must think of the present. How can all this affect our present difficulties?"

"How? Because I believe in the promises contained in the Bible. They sustain me. 'Ask, and ye *shall* receive.' Now, I have asked only for what should be ours, by right. I do not ask for great riches. I do not even desire them; for they can become easily a great burden. What I want is freedom."

"And you believe it will be given you?" asked Charles, looking with utter amazement into the frank, fearless, trusting eyes that now met his, and in which there was no shadow of doubt.

"I do. I can have it without depriving any one else. This debt was not created through any extravagance on the part of my father, or myself, but to save the good name of poor brother Hugh. We have done all we could to raise the money, and have failed. And now, I am awaiting the fulfilment of His promise, and in spite of seeming evidence to the contrary, I still believe it will be fulfilled."

Honest tears welled up into the eyes of Charles, as he looked at Mary. To him she seemed transfigured. Taking her hands, he said very gently, and with a world of compassion in his voice:

"My dear Mary, it would indeed be cruelty to have such faith shattered. But I fear——"

Lightly placing her rosy fingers on his lips, she exclaimed: "There! don't say that again. I hate the word *fear.*" Then, stepping back a few paces, she said smilingly: "Shall I tell you what else I believe?"

"Yes, do. You are so hopeful I nearly hope myself."

"I believe our wedding will take place just as we had intended," said Mary, tipping her head to one side with the pretty motion that was natural to her, and which always sent the blood tingling through her lover's veins. At her words his face became illumined, and he exclaimed:

"Ah! what joy if that were true. But how could it be?"

"I cannot tell, yet; but I believe—'Whatsoever ye ask in my name,—'" and placing both her hands in those of her lover, she continued: "and I have asked in His name for my lord and king."

Charles stooped and kissed her on the forehead as reverentially as if she had been some shrined saint, as he murmured: "Oh, my love, my love! If one half you say comes true, I shall be the happiest man alive."

At this moment, Mary and Charles heard Trixey announcing luncheon, which, on account of the commotion, had been delayed past the usual hour; and they at once joined the general and Dr. Malridge in the dining-room.

* * * * * * * *

All Clinton gloried in Mabelthorp, and the people seemed to think it belonged to them. It was one of the show

places. The town had crept to its gates. There were two or three roads that led to it, and the gates were always open, and every one was free to visit the grounds.

Mabelthorp was worth many thousand dollars more than the mortgage, and no one appreciated its monetary value more than Solmon.

Wherever Solmon went, he was accompanied by his henchman, Jacob Straus. They were slowly driving toward Mabelthorp, now, and Solmon was saying to Jacob:

"Vell, I nefer care much for dot Sheneral Starkvedder, anyhow. He so stuck up. He tink it a shame to lend money at pig interest. Yet now, he most peg I lend him money, und if I sharge any kind of interest, it vould pe all right."

"Yaw, yaw. Beoples change sometimes," said Jacob.

They were now within the grounds of Mabelthorp, and Solmon cintinued: "Vell, vell! it vas a nice blace anyhow." And he gazed covetously around. "I nefer haf suppose such good luck vould pe mine. I don't dink I let Panks get a holt on dis fine blace a little vile yet. Ach! vot a nice blace, after all, ven it pees mine, vich it vill be pretty quick now. I tole you vat, Yacob, such men as Sheneral Starkvedder ruin peesness. Now see! he leve de gates vide open to dis fine blace. De beoples vould bay to see doze trees. Old Starkvedder, he nefer sharge for nodings. De beoples come and go, mitout money und mitout brice. He not efen haf a sign, 'Keep off der grass.' Now, you see dot high up, green ting, mit vines und flowers und dings," said Solmon, pointing to what looked like a small mountain of trailing arbutus.

"Yaw, I see him," said Jacob.

"Vell, vot you dink dot vas?"

"I don't know," replied Jacob.

"Vell, dot vas a sthump;" and Solmon laughed as if

he thought it was a wonderfully good joke. "Tink, Yacob, of tressing an old sthump up like dot. De first Starkvedder, vot come to dis country, he blant dot tree, und call it 'Repose Tree'; und dey say it vas struck mit lightning on der day of der first pattle of der Reffolution. Und I, myself, haf seen beoples stand und look at dot old sthump, mit der eyes und der mout vide open, like it vos an elephant in der circus." And both Solmon and Jacob laughed immoderately at the idea. Then, Solmon continued:

"Und you see dot pig tree ofer dere, mit der little blate on der side, mit der seat made out of pushes? Vell, dot is 'Intependence Tree,' und dey say dot Shefferson und Atams sat dere, und talked der Intependence ofer. Und up in der house, dere is a baper, all scratched and marked up, dot tey say vas der first rough draft of der Declaration of Interpendence. Und down at Vashington, dey offer der Sheneral five tousand tollars for it, und vot do you tink? He say *no!* Youst dink of it, Yacob; five tousand tollars for a little, dirty, scratched-up baper. Und he say he couldn't sell it. Dere is a dirty mark on it; und some von writed on der side: 'Made py Shefferson's foot.' Und I heard der sheneral say dot it vas sacred; und he keep it in a glass case, und let nopoddy touch it. Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Solmon.

"Some beoples vas tam fools," said Jacob.

"Yaw, Yacob, dot vas so; und up dere at der house, dey got a whole bile of dings, und ven dey vas going to hafe der pig Centennial at Phillimitelphia, it take four showcases to hold der dings vot der sheneral lended to der Exposition. Von large showcase vas full of olt rags und trash."

"Olt rags! Vat vas dey for?" asked Jacob in surprise.

"Sure enough, vat *vas* dey for? Und yet, I heard

beople say dey vas vort more dan der veight in gold. Der sheneral had little clean vite cards tacked on each, to say vat dey vas. Now, vat you tink vas on doze cards? On von old boot it said, 'Cut from der frozen foot of von of Vashington's prave soldiers at der Battle of Trenton. Frank Samuels.'"

"Vas he a pig sheneral?" asked Jacob.

"No; yost a common soldier. Und dere vas a dozen old dings like dot—von old jacket vull of pullet-holes; und der card said: 'Taken from der dead poddy of William Smith, at Saratoga.' He vasn't an officer, eder. Put Sheneral Starkvedder say, almost mit tears in his eyes, dot efery man dot shed der plood in der Reffolution und stood py Sheneral Vashington, vas a hero; und dot he valued doze dings from der common soldiers as much as der officers. Dey say der old house, during der Reffolution, vas like a regular hospital. Oh, dey haf biles und biles of dings—efen dings dot perlonged to President Lincoln; und ven he could get a lot of money for dem, der sheneral say dey vos a part of his family, und he could not sell dem. Oh, he vas an offal fool. Und dot same year of der Centennial, der sheneral gif a pig Fourt of July celebration, in dese grounds. Und der beople come from all ofer—school-children from Phillimitelphia und New York. Und der sheneral, he brovide dinner for efery pody, mit parrels und parrels of lemonate, und wagon-loats of ice cream, und pig fireworks in der efening. Und he hire mans to go round und boint oud der trees, mit der little blates on, und tell all apout dem to der shildren. Some mans make pig speeches, und say der American eagle alvais hoffer ofer Mabelthorp on der Fourt of July. And der sheneral, he sharge nodings at all. I vos tolt it cost him tousands und tousands of dollars to put der blace in order, afterward;

for some of der beoples tried to carry avay der trees. But der sheneral sharge nodings, und just say: 'Oh, ve must pe batriotic!' He vas a fool, a tam fool, und ruin peesness; for he gif eferyting, und sharge nodings. I dels you, Yacob, ven I get der blace, I make pig shanges."

"Vell, vat you do mit it?" asked Jacob.

"Vell, der first ding I do, I kill doze pet rabbits und squirrels, und wring der necks of dose pirds they have up dere in dot glass house; und I dink doze pig trees make good firevood und lumber."

"Vell, tole you, don'd do nodings of der kind. Shut up der gates, und you can make pig interest on your money, just to show der blace. Und I hope you keep some dings to trink, and some nice pretzels," said Jacob, who was now beginning to feel thirsty.

"Py shingoes! dot vas a good idea, Yacob!" exclaimed Solmon with a laugh, slapping him on the shoulder. "You should pe a sheneral. I dinks, ven I get dis blace, I make it in a pier garten. Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Solmon. "It pe a nice blace for der guality to come. Ha, ha, ha! I vonder vot olt Starkvedder would say to dot, Yacob; his family mansion vich he say his olt ancestors pilded, a pier garten to make money to poot in der bocket of old Isaac Solmon, der money-lender, ha, ha, ha!" And Jacob joined him in his mirth.

"Und der beoples," continued Solmon, "can trink der pier under Constitution Tree, und Boston Tea-Party Tree, und Emancipation Tree, und sit on der same seat vat Lafayette und Vashington und all der odder olt fools sat on. I dink dot a fine idea. For you know, ve must pe batriotic, Yacob," derisively laughed Solmon, again slapping Jacob on the back. "I guess ve hear der American Eagle squeal some more, right avay, pretty quick!"

They both seemed to enjoy this immensely, and laughed heartily over it.

'And dot white-faced Miss Mary!" sneered Jacob.

"Yaw, Miss Mary," said Solmon echoing the sneer. "I vonder vat *she* say about doze shanges vot I intend to make."

They reached the house. General Starkweather saw them from the library window, and came out on the veranda.

"Good day, Mr. Solmon," said the general.

"Goot morning, Sheneral Starkvedder," said Solmon, very humbly taking off his hat and bowing very low. "I hopes I see you vell, Sheneral Starkvedder. I tinks I come around und pay you a little friendly visit, und dake a look at der blace, und see if you pin aple to raise der money yet. I hope you have. It vould pe a great pity to see dis fine blace go out of der family, my dear sir."

"There, there, Mr. Solmon, there is no need for us to waste words in idle talk. I think I comprehend fully the meaning of your friendly visit. So, we will come to the point at once. I am sorry to say I have failed to raise the money due you, and I fear I shall be obliged to let the law take its course."

"Dat is too pad! dat is a pity. I vas so very, very sorry."

"You may step into the house, and we will arrange the details without further delay," said the general. His face was set and white as he led the way to the library, where he had left Charles and Dr. Malridge.

At this moment, Sidney ascended the steps, and, as he entered the door, he saw Mary coming toward him. She looked surprised at seeing him. He was exultant. He would have, at least, the pleasure of seeing her humbled.

"Excuse me, Miss Starkweather, but I came at the request of my mother, who wished me to bring to her house the woman who took refuge here this morning."

"Why did not your mother come for her?" asked Mary.

"It was not convenient, and she requested me to do so."

"Mr. Banks, the woman came to me this morning, and asked for protection, because she was penniless and homeless. I gave it to her. She told me you had offered her a position, but that she preferred not to accept it."

Was this the woman he thought to so successfully humiliate? Here was Mary, cool, calm, a beggar, standing between him and the object of his passion.

"Why should you take her in? She has no claim upon you."

"Her womanhood gave her a claim upon me," replied Mary. She did not intend that he should know that Mrs. Multon had left Mabelthorp. She could trust the servants, and they already had been instructed to say nothing of what had occurred. She was so self-possessed, Sidney could not understand it. He had expected to find her in tears. It was exasperating. He could hardly contain himself. As he stood there, both he and Mary could hear Charles expostulating with Solomon.

"Miss Starkweather," said Sidney, "I know your position. You have ruin staring you in the face. You cannot give help nor protection to this woman. My mother can give both."

Mary's face flushed; but before she could reply, Malcolm dashed into the house, half crying, half laughing, exclaiming, as he rushed to the door of the library:

"Oh, Miss Mary! Oh, General Starkweather! Hurrah, hurrah! Such news—such glorious news! What do you think? Mabelthorp is saved!"

"Saved!" exclaimed Sidney, forgetting himself. "Even now, Mr. Solmon is here to foreclose the mortgage."

"You are right, my dear sir," chimed in Solmon.

"Not so fast, you miserable old imp of Satan," said Malcolm, doubling up his fist and going for Solmon.

"Malcolm, Malcolm!" exclaimed Mary and the general.

"Oh, don't be alarmed, sir," said Malcolm, turning to the general. "You see, the strangest sort of thing has happened. You know the old piece of ground that is mine, down in Tennessee—that my father left me—that had nothing but briars and stones on it; that I have offered to sell time and time again for a hundred dollars? Well, they have found copper on it, and the Commonwealth Mining Company have offered me fifty thousand dollars for it. They pay me the money next week. We will save old Mabelthorp, thank God!"

"Not if I knows anything about it," said Solmon.

"It is too late, Mr. Solmon," said Mary. "God has heard our prayers, and in a few days you will have your money."

Forgetting craft in his greed and anger, Solmon now launched forth menacingly; for he hated these proud Starkweathers almost as deeply as Banks did.

"I cannot vait. De money is due now. I durn your old ancestral hall into a pier saloon—Mabelthorp Pier Garten. How vill dot look over der entrance? It vill addract gustomers, I think. Ha, ha, ha!"

"You old devil!" cried Malcolm, springing toward him, "if I had you outside the house, I'd throttle you."

The general sprang between them, and laying his hand on Malcolm, pushed him back. How he loved this honest soul for his loyalty.

"You trow me out, would you?" exclaimed Solmon. "I vill pe master here pretty quick, and den, I vill trow *you* oud, and your precious master and mistress vid you."

But at this moment, a buggy dashed up to the door,

and Harry sprang up the steps just in time to hear Solmon's last words.

"Not much, you old Shylock. Here are your ducats, and the pound of flesh is safe!"

Sidney stood staring at the interruption. There were a few seconds, after Harry thrust the check into Solmon's hands, before any one seemed to take in the situation. Then Sidney saw the whole structure of his vengeance totter and fall. Colonel Eversoll and Dr. Malridge sprang to the general's side, each seizing a hand, with the simultaneous exclammation: "Why did you not tell us?"

Mary fell weeping into Charles's arms, and he drew her quickly into an adjoining room. Harry was beaming joyously.

It was a crucial moment. Sidney never forgot the picture to the last day of his life, the great love for each other in the faces of those three men. And for once, his overbearing manner and ready tongue failed him. In the presence of those men and their great truth and loyalty, he stood abashed and baffled. It was now several years since he had thrust his sword into the Starkweather wheel of fortune. It had been dulled before by defeat. Now, it had snapped at the hilt.

No one paid the slightest heed to him. He turned away and walked through the drawing-room. He was in hopes he might see Mrs. Multon. He heard Malcolm shouting the good news to the servants, and saw them capering and crying for joy—heard them trooping into the library. He had come here expecting to see tears and sorrow. Instead, he saw dignified silence. Now, that the danger was past, there was tumult everywhere. They all seemed beside themselves.

Sidney sat down and reviewed the case. He had schemed for months. Mary, Mrs. Multon, Mabelthorp—all he

had planned for—were swept completely and forever from his grasp; and he found himself helpless.

In his time, Sidney had succeeded in doing a world of mischief. His plans had been successful with others. He could not understand it, and he began to have a superstitious feeling about it. He could not understand that evil fell to naught on those enshrined in Truth. And yet, this atmosphere contained what he most coveted.

It was the first and only time in his life that he ever felt wholly and entirely defeated; the first time that he had felt that money could not accomplish everything. He was subdued for the first time. But the snake was scotched, not killed.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRIUMVIRATE.

THE three men who stood there with clasped hands, were almost like brothers. They had been boys together; afterward, in college together; and still later, they had been comrades and brother officers in the same regiment in the Civil War. Nature had been prolific with all three, bestowing different gifts on each. Colonel Eversoll and Dr. Malridge were rugged as oaks, while General Starkweather was tall, slender, and strikingly handsome. He was a very prince among men, this proud descendant of an old house. There was an odd charm about him. He was brilliant, yet reticent, and shrank from notoriety and general contact with the world in a way that only was equaled by the avidity with which his two friends courted it.

When college days were over, the general's two friends had gone forth to bear the brunt and battle with the world, each according to his own light. General Starkweather had returned to the care of his estate that had come to him by inheritance. By nature, he was a student. When the war was over, he returned to his books that he had relinquished only when his country was threatened.

Those years of turmoil had served to cement, even more closely, the bonds of friendship between these three men. Dr. Malridge, with his great head and massive figure,

with the strength and vigor of a Hercules, was out in the world, fighting with the will of a Joshua of old, for what he deemed to be for the right and good of mankind. His oratorical brilliancy, beautiful imagery, and dramatic style were only too familiar to the public. His noble conceptions in the realms of thought, his religious idealism, regarded by him as the only true and potent source of mental and spiritual sublimity, and his veneration for things orthodox were known and honored throughout the English-speaking world. There was no apathy, no numbness of the soul, in this grand man of large gifts and burning energies. He had that surer, higher faith in what he stood for. This religion of his, which was to him undefiled and incorruptible, claimed and had all the energy of his splendid powers. He loved his two boyhood friends as only a man of his character could love, and his most poignant sorrow was the stand Colonel Eversoll had taken in regard to Orthodoxy. He acknowledged the great intellect of his friend; but what was this man's intellect if he knew not God? And to know God, in Dr. Malridge's opinion, was to be orthodox. The assertion of the colonel as to the God of Nature, did not satisfy him. He did not think that light and air and the world beautiful were God. These were simply God's attributes. The colonel might be high-minded, virtuous, and pure with little or no avail. He positively shuddered to hear him express himself, at times, in what he considered the most blasphemous terms. And his great hope was to see this man receive what he believed to be the true Spirit of God. His great concern in regard to the colonel can better be appreciated by giving the reader an extract from a letter written by Dr. Malridge to General Starkweather, after hearing Colonel Eversoll, for the first time, launch forth in his denunciations of Orthodoxy:

"My feelings, at the moment, may be imagined; but I cannot describe them. Never did such sensations agitate my soul, as I heard the terrible words that burned like scorpion-stings in their blasphemous denunciation. I thought of the scenes of our boyhood. I thought of the cradle of religion in which he had been rocked by his pious father and mother, and of their tender, fostering care, through which they had endeavored to install into the minds of their children, those pious principles that had comforted and guarded their own darkest hours of adversity; and through which they hoped to prepare their children to face the cares and anxieties that press down upon all those who sail their barque on the stormy sea of time, and which, in the hour of misfortune and disappointment are the only things in man's tempest-tossed life that can buoy up his strength and courage, soothe and comfort him, and land him safely where tempest and sorrow never come—'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.'

"As the tear of sorrow stole down my cheek, while listening, I could only pray for him, that when the end came, when he was shrouded in the sorrow, misfortune, and disappointment of an unfruitful life and ungarnered energies, he would then, if not before, turn for consolation to the God of his fathers."

* * * * * * * *

And now let us turn to the last of the triumvirate—Colonel Eversoll, who had set himself the task of investigating things. This earnest, highly gifted man also had an international reputation. As a lawyer he had achieved eminence and had earned an exalted standing enjoyed by few at the American Bar. But he was more widely known as the "modern Tom Paine," and for his stand against "Orthodoxy and the Church, with its softening of the brain

and ossification of the heart," and for his tongue and pen which were sharper than a serpent's tooth; as with the great battering-ram of his logic, he assailed the creeds and dogmas of the orthodox religion.

How strange that these two men, reared in the same environments, playing as boys together, again as college chums and later as men, when the war cloud hung heavy over their country, had clasped hands, shouldered their guns, and faced the enemy, side by side; both grand, vigorous, and forceful—how strange that they should be so near, yet so far apart—so like, yet so totally different!

Both had attained phenomenal success; both had outstripped youth's ambition; both felt they had a mission to perform; both earnestly sought the upliftment of humanity; both were absolutely without fear; both possessed great individuality; both were brilliant orators; both were stirred by the loftiest impulses; both were great in their achievements; both had stood the storm of censure and the blaze of adulation; both loved the beautiful in man and Nature; both were overflowing with a wealth of exalted sentiment; both were idealistic and poetic; both were adorned with conspicuous virtues; both had drunk deep from the golden cup of Success. Yet no two battle-ships ever assailed each other in mid-ocean with more tremendous force than did these two men assail each other. It was like two great thunder-bolts. One heard the roar of artillery, the clash of arms, and saw the flash of fire. And nothing pleased the doughty colonel more than to stir up his old friend and comrade. They always met with drawn swords. Neither spared the other. The colonel's opinions were like the bitterness of gall to Dr. Malridge, and his terrible arraignment of this man who assailed his orthodox beliefs, was tremendous in its power, and only equaled by the force and brilliancy with which his arguments were

hurled back by this magical orator as he ravaged the empire of orthodoxy with invective and logic, in thunder tones that thrilled all who heard him, and carried conviction to the hearts of many, as he poured forth the honest beliefs of a soul that refused to be fettered.

The keenness of his satire was like stinging nettles to his opponent, as he riddled the pet tenets long held in veneration. Rightfully interpreted, none could fail to see that he honestly tried to be just. His enemies said he tore down, but failed to build up. Shall both assertions be admitted?

He hated hypocrisy and shams, and rent the veil that hid them. He tore off the strait-jacket of respectable creeds, and garroted the devil of Orthodoxy, and put out the fires of hell. Strangled dogmas were as thick around him as "serpents around the cradle of Hercules."

These are the things that he has torn down, and in their stead, he has built an independent temple in the brain of every man who rightly understood him. It is founded on the Rock of Common Sense, built of bricks made from Reason; and within, on the high altar chiseled out of marble from the quarry of Tolerance, Love is enthroned as queen. On her head, she wears a crown, jeweled with immortelles, wrought from the smiles of little children. In her right hand, she bears a torch in whose bowl the flame is fed by the chrism of marital chastity; and in her left hand she holds a scroll on which is written "The Declaration of the Free." Her handmaidens are Justice, Truth, and Mercy.

Not build up? Was ever fairer temple reared by human energy and brain? And all the storms of bigotry and floods of religious intolerance can beat upon its walls through all eternity without avail. And that for which he stands shall live when he shall sleep.

CHAPTER X.

WILLOW SPRINGS.

EIGHT years have elapsed, and another June day has come; and, just at this moment, the strongest aspiration of society is for cool retreats where wave and woodland are to be found. For the early summer, especially, Willow Springs is ideal. Besides, in the last few years, it has become quite popular for the ultra-fashionable set to sojourn here for awhile, before going to Newport or any other fashionable resort.

Willow Springs is very exclusive, and it is whispered abroad that the medicinal properties of the water are marvelous for removing the effects of late hours, champagne, theatres, operas, balls, and late breakfasts of a long season; and in fitting those that indulge therein, for a whirl of gayety elsewhere and for the coming season. Therefore, as Willow Springs has been made fashionable, it is a success. Many are already here, and daily their numbers are increasing.

On this beautiful June morning, the sun shines brightly, the birds sing blithely, the winds whisper gently through, over, and about, one of the most exclusive family hotels at the Springs. It is situated far back from the road, and it is sheltered by beautiful shade-trees, underneath which are

rustic seats and gaily colored hammocks. A beautiful lawn slopes in every direction, and on either side an immense fountain throws cooling sprays into the air. From the house, shaded walks lead directly to the springs. There are great wide doors and windows, all open to admit the breeze; and a broad piazza along which are strewn inviting chairs and divans. Indeed, it would be difficult to find a more alluring retreat than the Willowby Rest Hotel. The autocrat presiding over it, is a Mrs. Preston—fair, fat, and forty. Does one wish to engage rooms in this charming house? He must show either a long pedigree, or be vouched for by some one *with* a pedigree; or he must possess an unquestionable and respectable bank account. No stray wayfarers can find entrance here. The law is as immutable as that of the Medes and Persians.

On this special morning, the sumptuously appointed drawing-room looks very inviting. Near one of the open windows, where the wind, moistened with the spray from the fountain, wafts its cooling breezes, a man sits, reading the morning paper. He is in an invalid's chair on wheels. One foot is heavily bandaged and propped up on a rest attached to the chair. He drops the paper, and looks out of the window. It is our old and valued friend, Colonel Eversoll. He is watching a battle between a small boy, eight or nine years old, and his nurse; for a moment the nurse seems victorious, but the boy is simply overpowered on account of her superior strength. She is heaping upon him all the invectives that her limited vocabulary contains. The little fellow seems either too proud to cry, or, possibly he knows it will do no good, and is making a desperate fight for his liberty by way of scratching and hair-pulling. At last, he seizes her hand in his teeth, she gives a cry of pain, and relaxes her hold. Instantly, he is off, with a defiant laugh of victory, and a

ringing, ironical shout at the nurse's threats to have him punished.

The colonel had watched the entire battle, and laughed when the little fellow got the best of his opponent. His sympathies were with the child, and he said mentally: "Gritty little devil. He deserves better treatment."

He was just about to resume his newspaper, when Mrs. Preston bustled in and inquired effusively: "Good morning, Colonel Eversoll. Did you rest well last night?"

"No; not altogether. The last part of the night my foot pained me a good deal. Change of weather, I think. I find my foot a good barometer. By the way, the Thorntons come to-day, do they not?"

"Yes, I am expecting them now. They were to come on the early train," said Mrs. Preston, glancing out of the window.

"I feel impatient to see them, and the little one, whom I have not seen since she was three years old. She was a beautiful child. They say she never cried like other children."

"The Thorntons are old friends of yours, I believe."

"Oh, Lord, yes! I knew Thornton when he was in short trousers, and his wife when she was in pinafores," replied the colonel.

"Really? How interesting! I understand he is very talented in his profession, and in a political way."

"Yes, I think he is. I have just been reading a speech of his. It doesn't seem but yesterday that Charles was playing marbles, and now, he is our next candidate for Congress. Thornton is a bright fellow, and has gone straight up in his career. But if there is anything in blood he ought to. He comes of good old stock."

"How glad I am to have such people in my house," sighed Mrs. Preston.

"Oh! by the way, Mrs. Preston," exclaimed the colonel with a twinkle in his eye, "I think I will charge you a commission."

"How so?" queried Mrs. Preston.

"Well, you see, it's this way," said the colonel, assuming a business tone, and pretending to look very serious. "When your husband was alive, I knew him well, and knowing you had this house, I came here."

"Yes, I see," said Mrs. Preston laughingly, "but where does the commission come in?"

"Just you wait," said the colonel. "Dr. Malridge wrote me about his sister's illness. I wrote and advised him to bring her to Dr. Cline, and recommended your house. Harry Burbank came here to be with me, for I am his attorney. And now the Thornton's are coming. I know they are not sick, and I am trying to flatter myself that they are coming principally to see me. See?" interrogatively exclaimed the colonel.

"I think I do," laughed Mrs. Preston. "The commission is yours, Colonel. I give you *carte blanche*. Order what you like. The house, the larder, everything is at your command."

"Thanks. Generous, surely! I'll make the larder suffer."

"But about Mrs. Tremaine?"

"Well, what about her?"

"I'm sure there is a mystery about that woman," significantly replied Mrs. Preston.

"She brought you good references, didn't she?"

"The very best."

"Then let her alone. If she has a secret, it is her own. Be generous, Mrs. Preston. She is certainly very beautiful and very interesting. The railway accident that was the cause of her little girl's being a life-long cripple,

must have been a rearful shock to her. She seems a devoted mother."

"But she is so silent, so distant. She won't talk."

"What an admirable fault," laughed the colonel.

Mrs. Preston had allowed herself "to take on fat," to use the vulgar parlance of the day. She wanted terribly to be fashionable, but that could never be. She envied every woman who could wear the low-bust corset-girdle, while she had to confine herself to the stiff-back, stiff-bust, straight up-and-down corset, in order that she might be able to tuck her superabundant flesh away in odd corners, and make it possible to get a respectable fit to her gowns. She had been told that fat had no excuse, but she did not believe it. She had secretly taken all kinds of anti-fat remedies, and had nearly starved herself, all to no purpose. She also had been told that fat and age come together. It was discouraging. She was a widow. She had ceased to sigh over the past and was looking hopefully to the future. She was very envious of this tall, willowy, beautiful, rarely-gifted woman, Mrs. Tremaine, who, on entering a room, drew all eyes in her direction. The very *frou-frou* of her silken skirts nettled Mrs. Preston.

Mrs. Preston was silent for a few moments, and then asked: "And Sidney Banks—what about him? Are you responsible for him, too?"

"No, no! not for Banks. I also have known him from a boy, but I don't know why he came here, nor why he remains."

"Oh, I think it is very easy to see why he remains," said Mrs. Preston, with a toss of her head, a lifting of her eyebrows, and a shrugging of her fat shoulders. "To see how he and Mr. Burbank follow Mrs. Tremaine around, is enough to make one sick. Mr. Banks makes no pretence of hiding his admiration. But Mr. Burbank is

always trying to amuse and interest her little invalid daughter, although it's plain to see it's the mother he's after, even though she does pretend to avoid him."

"Well, she does avoid him, doesn't she?"

"Dear me! that's just like you men. You can't see anything where a handsome woman is concerned. Two millionaires dangling after her! But it's plain to me which one she likes. Her avoiding Mr. Burbank is simply a ruse to draw him on. She is smart. It will end by making him her victim."

The colonel laughed heartily. "Don't worry about Mr. Burbank, Mrs. Preston. His heart is a thing of 'shreds and patches.'"

"Oh, I don't know! I think he has a good deal of heart left."

"Well, if he has, it's iron-clad, and has withstood many sieges. So don't waste any sympathy on him."

At this moment Mrs. Preston looked up, and saw the servant ushering in Mrs. Thornton and her little daughter, Gertrude. Hastily rising, she went forward, greeting Mrs. Thornton in the most complacent manner.

"Ah! Mrs. Thornton, I am delighted to see you, and so glad to welcome you to Willow Springs. I hope you will like it."

"I am sure I shall," cordially replied Mary.

"Here is an old friend of yours, I believe," said Mrs. Preston, turning to the colonel.

Mary hurried to the colonel, who exclaimed, as he clasped both her hands:

"My dear, dear girl, this is a pleasure, I assure you. Since I received Charlie's letter saying you were coming here, I have looked forward to your arrival as a shipwrecked mariner looks for land. Well, well, well! and this

is little Gertrude! My! what a big girl. How are all the folk? Where are your father and Charlie?"

"All well, thank you. Papa and Charles are both with me, and will be here in a few minutes. They were waylaid by some friends at the station, and Gertrude and I came up alone."

"That comes of having a politician for a husband," laughed the colonel.

"I am willing to pay the penalty," answered Mary, as she echoed the colonel's laugh. "But tell me, how are you getting along? Better, I hope!"

"Oh, I am all right, but this confounded gout doesn't improve a bit. But I'll not detain you. I hope we shall see a good deal of each other, now that you are here."

"Of course we shall. To see you, was one of the pleasures anticipated in coming here," said Mary.

Just as Mary turned to speak to Mrs. Preston, a tall, distinguished man entered from a room leading off the drawing-room. This was Dr. Cline, the resident physician. He crossed the room and was standing near Colonel Eversoll as Mrs. Preston, evidently bent upon making an agreeable impression, smilingly said:

"I hope you will enjoy your stay here, Mrs. Thornton. We have a great many delightful people staying with us, and your little girl will find so many lovely children to play with."

Just at this moment a fearful noise was heard outside and a child's voice exclaimed:

"Let me alone! Let me alone, I tell you!" and the little boy that had recently fought the battle on the lawn, dashed into the room, closely pursued by his nurse. The boy had an open penknife in his hand. He turned and faced the nurse, striking an attitude of defense, saying,

as the lightning fairly flashed from his eyes: "Don't you touch me! I'll kill you if you do!"

Dr. Cline laughed and said, sotto voce, to the colonel: "This is a specimen of the nice children. That boy needs killing."

"Oh, you bad, wicked, awful boy!" said the nurse. "Give me that knife."

"Keep away from me!" answered the boy resolutely.

"You horrible boy, Carl Burton!" chimed in Mrs. Preston, quivering with rage at the dreadful scene being enacted in her drawing-room, in the presence of guests that she so much desired should find her home *comme il faut*. I'll tell your father on you, Master Carl, and he will give you the worst whipping you ever had, you naughty boy!"

He turned upon her with the fury of a young tiger, as he exclaimed defiantly:

"I don't care for you, nor my father, nor my mother, nor anybody, and you had better let me alone, I tell you."

"What has he been doing now?" asked Mrs. Preston of the nurse.

"He stole that knife from Henry, the stable-boy, and he has been cutting and slashing with it. He shall give it to me this minute, or I'll shake the very life out of him."

The boy darted past Mary, the nurse rushed forward. As she passed, Mary caught her by the arm and held her firmly, and then, without raising her voice, she said:

"Stop! let the boy alone. Don't touch him."

The nurse stopped as if she had been shot, and was apparently speechless, looking first at Mary and then at Mrs. Preston, as that lady said in a surprised voice:

"Indeed, Mrs. Thornton, you need not waste any sym-

pathy on that boy. He is bad, wicked, and vicious. No one can do anything with him. Yesterday, he climbed into an apple tree and sat there munching little green apples, and blazing away at every one that came along. One hit his nurse and nearly knocked her senseless. Another took Dr. Cline on the side of the nose. He was so angry, he declared the only way to get Carl out of the tree was to shoot him. His father gave him a fearful whipping. He is the worst boy I ever saw."

"How can you say that, Mrs. Preston?" said Mary. Then, turning toward Carl, she said in a very kind, but convincing tone: "He is not a bad boy; he is a good boy, I know, and would rather obey than disobey. Here, Gertrude," turning to her little daughter, "ask Carl to let you bring the knife to me."

Gertrude went unhesitatingly to Carl and said: "Won't you give me the knife, Carl?"

The boy stood irresolute. Gertrude put out her little hand, and he allowed her to take the knife. Then, feeling himself humiliated and conquered, his beautiful black eyes filled with tears, and thrusting his fists into them, he was about to rush from the room, when Mary, laying her hand on his head, said brightly and encouragingly:

"Come, my boy, there is nothing to cry for. I knew I was right. You *are* a very good boy. We have just arrived and we have two of the loveliest pet rabbits. Come and see them, and help us find a place to put them." Then, turning to Mrs. Preston, she said: "Mrs. Preston, I would like to go to my room."

"Here, Aleck," said Mrs. Preston to the servant that had ushered in Mrs. Thornton, and who was waiting near the door; "show Mrs. Thornton to the suite of rooms on the second floor of the east wing."

"Yes'm," replied Aleck, taking up Mary's satchel, and leading the way out of the room. Mary glanced in the direction of the colonel, and smiling, said:

"Adieu, until luncheon;" and quitted the room, taking both the children with her.

There was none of the air of "See what I have done." She had never raised her voice, although she had spoken firmly to the nurse. It was all done in the easiest, most natural manner. The boy had been completely conquered for the time being, by her kindness and gentleness. She had not said three words before he instinctively felt she was with him and not against him. It was the first time that any one had ever taken his part. He had become so accustomed to being called bad, so used to punishment, that he was quite overcome and wanted to run away and hide himself for yielding. Wherever he had been forced to yield before, he had been taunted with it afterward. But when Mary laid her hand on his head, and when he glanced up in her face and found no expression of victory, no air of having conquered him, only sweet solicitude and love, the boy was ready to go with her any place.

When Mary left the drawing-room, there was silence for a moment. Then the colonel said, as he watched the retreating figure:

"There goes another sublime specimen of the domestic animal that I love—woman; the noblest work of God."

"Was ever anything so humiliating?" indignantly exclaimed Mrs. Preston. "To have that boy make such an exhibition of himself! I must really talk to his father about him. I can't have this thing happen again. His mother wants him sent off to school, and that's the only place for him. I can't have him here." And she bustled

out of the room, followed by the nurse, who, for once in her life, seemed to have been rendered speechless.

"If that kid were mine, I would strangle him and have done with it. Who is the lady?" queried Dr. Cline.

"That is the wife of young Judge Thornton of Clinton, New Jersey," replied the colonel.

"Indeed! She is one of the finest and handsomest women I ever saw. Is she sick?"

"Sick? No—perfect health."

"Perfect health? What a wonderful woman. My! and to see her get the best of that young hyena."

"I have known her all my life. As a child she was a regular spitfire. She seems, now, to be possessed of a sort of magnetic power, strong enough to get the best of any one. She is, in fact, a glorious woman," said the colonel admiringly.

"She is indeed," assented Dr. Cline.

The colonel sat looking out of the window at a group of ladies on the lawn, and the doctor was assiduously polishing his eyeglasses. Then, as if a thought had occurred to him, the colonel said:

"Oh, by the way, doctor, I see that the new sanatorium is all ready for the occupants, and your rivals are to take possession to-day or to-morrow."

"Rivals!" humorously exclaimed Dr. Cline. "Well, I like that! I am dreadfully afraid they will take all my patients."

"I hear a woman's at the head of it."

"I imagine I see her now," said the doctor sarcastically; "some slab-sided, short-haired creature with bloomers and a wheel."

"Two or three wheels, no doubt," laughed the colonel, significantly tapping his head. "'Divine Healing.' That is the inscription over the door. What bosh! There

should be a law protecting people from such imposition. And to think a woman should be at the head of it. It's bad enough for *men* to be imposters."

"They claim to cure everything—from a bee-sting to a cancer," laughed the doctor.

At this moment Mrs. Tremaine entered the room, followed by the nurse wheeling her little daughter, Ruth, in a chair perambulator. She inclined her head and murmured a morning salutation to the gentlemen as she passed on to the extreme end of the long drawing-room.

"Cure everything," said the colonel, continuing the conversation. "Well, let them cure that child that you and a dozen other physicians have pronounced incurable, and I will believe it is Divine Healing myself. Holy Moses!" he exclaimed, invoking one of his favorite deities, "when I look at that mother's sad face, and know, that perhaps her child may live twenty years or more, a helpless cripple, I could forget my own pain in sympathy for her. I had to leave the room yesterday after your final decision had been made known to Mrs. Tremaine, when the Rev. Dr. Malridge, in his efforts to console her, told her that it was God's will. His will! as if any God could condemn a little child to life-long suffering!"

"Yes; so say I. Let them cure that child, and, as you say, I will believe in Divine Healing myself," said the doctor, rising and consulting his watch. "But it is my office-hour, and I must away;" and he made his exit.

The colonel resumed his reading, and had been thus occupied but a little while, when Billy, his black servant came in, grinning and showing a magnificent set of ivories.

"Well, Billy, I began to think you had forgotten me," said the colonel.

"Law, Massa Eversoll, yo nevah b'lieve that, shore. You

know, mighty well, I nevah forgit you. I jus' tuk a little peek in hyar a few minutes ago, an' you dun laughen' an' talken' an' I thought you habin' sech a good time, I 'lows I wouldn' 'sturb you. I's already now, t' take you dis blessed minute." And Billy wheeled the colonel out into the hall where he got his hat for him, and trundled him off toward the springs.

The nurse was amusing little Ruth, and Mrs. Tremaine was pacing to and fro near them. She was not only a beautiful woman, but very unusual looking. She had large black eyes, and raven hair that was parted in the middle and brushed back like two great wings, from her forehead that was as smooth and as white as marble. Her face was full of character. It was a womanly face—a face to dream about.

Gertrude entered the room, carrying a pet rabbit. She was evidently out on an exploring expedition, making herself acquainted with her surroundings. She was an incarnated joy. She had blue eyes, and golden hair that curled loosely over her shapely little head. She was rather tall for her age, and had just enough flesh to be dimpled. She was thoroughly alive and always busy with something. She was very natural, childlike and intelligent, and a regular little chatterbox.

Little Ruth had paralysis of the spine, and could not sit up; but she could turn her head slightly from side to side on the pillow. Seeing Gertrude, she exclaimed to her nurse:

"Oh, look! there is a new baby girl."

Gertrude heard her, and going toward her said: "Oh, I'm not a baby! I'm my papa's little woman. Don't you want to come and play with me? I'll show you all my dollies."

Mrs. Tremaine ceased her restless walking, and said:

"She cannot play with you, dear, but you can bring your dollies here and play with them."

"Why can't she come?" queried Gertrude.

"She cannot walk, dear," said Mrs. Tremaine, contrasting in her mind the sad condition of her own darling little Ruth to this rosy, healthy, bounding child.

"Hasn't she any feet?" questioned Gertrude.

At this little Ruth laughed merrily, and Mrs. Tremaine, kneeling down by the child, drew the afghan aside, and taking the diminutive feet in her hands, said, as she caressed them:

"Yes, dear. See! She has two little feet, but she is lame and cannot walk."

Gertrude looked at Ruth as if she hardly knew what to make of it. Then she sat down on the floor by Mrs. Tremaine, and passing her hands over the dainty little slippers, said, after a short silence:

"But she *shall* walk. She *shall* be well and strong, and run and play with me. What is your name?"

"Ruth Tremaine."

"Ruth Tremaine. Oh, that's a pretty name, I think. Can't your nurse wheel you out on the veranda? I have all my dollies out there and my rabbits."

"Can't I go, mamma?" said the little pleading voice.

"Yes, dear," answered Mrs. Tremaine. "Take her, nurse."

Ruth put out her hand to Gertrude who took it, holding it in hers, as she walked beside the perambulator. Mrs. Tremaine stood looking after them. The contrast between the two children was cruel, and more than she could bear, and her eyes filled with tears.

CHAPTER XI.

HENRY BURBANK AVOWS HIS LOVE.

Harry Drummond had now become Harry Burbank, according to the conditions of his uncle's will. In fact, he had now borne the new name for eight years, and he had almost forgotten that he had ever known any other. He was a millionaire—a man of leisure. He was fatherless, motherless, sisterless, brotherless, wifeless, and almost relationless. Had he been very poor, undoubtedly he would have been even entirely without relatives, but being very rich, distant ones cropped up periodically.

To Harry, Colonel Eversoll was father and brother, counselor and confessor. He had run down to see the colonel, intending to remain only a day; but finding Willow Springs such a delightful spot, and the colonel very much in need of companionship—these facts, together with an incident that had occurred, made him conclude to prolong his stay. He had been been at Willow Springs six weeks already.

The incident referred to, happened the first night after his arrival. He had gone to his room with a lighted cigar in his hand, and he determined to finish it on the piazza, where he could enjoy the night air. He stepped through

the low window, and had just seated himself on the railing, when a sound of suppressed weeping reached his ears. A bright light was shining from the window, next his own. The curtains were down. The sobbing becoming more intense, he arose and stepped nearer the window. There was a small opening in the curtain, and through it he obtained a complete view of the interior of the room, reflected in a large mirror against the wall. Seated in a low chair, with her face buried in her arms that rested on a table, sat a woman. She wore a soft, creamy silk négligé robe, profusely trimmed with lace. Her black hair was unbound, and swept the floor. She was shaken with grief. The paroxysm seemed to increase rather than diminish. Suddenly, she sprang to her feet, and sweeping her hair back from her tear-stained face, exclaimed aloud, as she stretched her arms toward heaven:

"O, God, O, God! what have I done to deserve this punishment? I never sinned consciously. Then why, oh, why, should this be? Smite *me*. Let *me* suffer; but spare *her*. O, God, spare my loved one!" At the last words the woman sank to the floor, choked with sobs, a quivering, stricken heap of grief.

Harry had stood transfixed by the sight of this storm-riven soul. It was some moments before he realized that he was intruding upon the privacy of another. When he did, he turned quickly away and entered his own room. But sleep was driven from his eyes, and he could not shut out that figure with its arms stretched pleadingly upward. It had never occurred to him that any one could be beautiful in grief; but this woman most certainly was. He remembered the contour of the perfectly rounded hands and arms from which the loose sleeves had fallen. He recalled to mind how, as she sank to the floor, his first impulse had been to step through the window, to lift her

up and comfort her; and he really found caressing names springing to his lips. In fact, he had taken one step in the direction of the window, when he was recalled to his senses. He wondered who she was. She was very youthful, and if ever purity was written on a face, it was written on hers. Had the whole world cried out against her and reviled her, it would have had no effect on him. No woman could look like that and be otherwise than pure. Strange; but Harry, though having stood the storms of managing mammas, designing women, and simpering maidens, now knew, somehow instinctively, that he had met his fate. Married or single, henceforth this woman would have an interest for him. He found himself thinking that one who could suffer such intense grief, would be capable of the most ardent love. And he felt that though it was against all precedent, he must go to her. He cursed the maker of forms that forbade him doing so, that prevented the offering of relief to a stricken, helpless creature in sorrow. But no. Instead of going to her, he must sit helplessly by, and know that though only the wall divided them, he was powerless.

It was long in the night before he slept, and then, only to live over and over in his dreams the scene he had witnessed, and to find himself strangely and vaguely tangled up in the warp and woof of it.

In the morning he determined to ask no questions, but to keep on the lookout for his fair incognito. All day he had scanned carefully the face of each woman he met; but *she* did not appear.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, he saw Dr. Malridge and Colonel Eversoll sitting on the lawn, and he went forward to join them. He was close to them ere he was aware of a third party—a lady. She was sitting on a rustic seat and was leaning back against the trunk of a

tree. The colonel introduced Harry, who turned to bow. It was *she!*

For the first time in his life, Harry was thoroughly disconcerted. He blushed like a schoolboy. Mrs. Tremaine, on the contrary, was calm, dignified, and self-possessed. Harry recovered himself, and took a seat near her, and the conversation became general. He hardly knew what was said; he only knew that she talked easily and gracefully, that her manner was perfect. Could this be the woman he had seen the night before so racked and torn? It did not seem possible. What could have been the cause of the outbreak he had witnessed? The colonel had called her *Mrs.* Then she was married. Was she ill-treated by her husband? Whom had she meant when she prayed God to spare *her?* So many things were surging through his mind that he dropped out of the conversation entirely, and sat mute as an automaton. He was suddenly recalled to himself by the nurse, who appeared with little Ruth. He was wonderfully struck by the pathos in the child's face. Her eyes were large and blue, and her hair black. She looked much younger than she really was. Such a little, patient face. He leaned forward and spoke to her. She caught his hand and held it, and looking up into his face for a minute, as if studying it, she said:

"Kiss me."

Harry stooped and kissed her; when he lifted his head, he glanced toward Mrs. Tremaine. Her face was crimson, and her eyes had a surprised, searching look in them, as she sought his face. He felt quite sure she had hardly given him a glance until that moment. When he saw the tender look in his eyes, she said:

"You are a favored individual, Mr. Burbank. I never before knew my little daughter to ask any one to kiss her. In fact, she decidedly objects to being kissed."

"Oh, no I don't, mamma! I like *you* to kiss me very, very often, and I wanted the gentleman to kiss me, because I like him, too. He is so noble looking."

"What a complimentary speech, my darling little dove," laughed Harry. "From this moment, I am your true knight. You have only to command me, and I will obey." He knelt before her, and kissed her hand. This delighted the child very much, and she laughed merrily.

"My nurse has been reading to me about the grand old knights. Weren't they brave to fight for the ladies?" Then, with a sudden thought: "Oh! but those knights wore their ladies' colors, a glove, or a ribbon, or something. You will have to wear my color if you are my knight, won't he, mamma?"

"I think he will," smilingly assented the mother, surprised at this sudden fancy, and at seeing Harry still kneeling, with amused face, at the feet of the child; yet very much pleased at anything that brought a ray of joy and forgetfulness of pain to her loved one.

"How will this do?" said Mrs. Tremaine, detaching a little blue bow of ribbon that ornamented the child's dress and giving it to her.

"That's just the thing," said Harry, "and it's such a beautiful color, just like my lady's eyes."

"Will you wear it forever and ever for me, Mister Sir Knight?"

Harry took the little hand that held the ribbon, and said gallantly, as he looked straight into her beautiful blue eyes:

"I will wear it always, and I will be your own true knight forever and forever;" then kissing her hand again, he continued: But you must pin it on for me;" and leaning forward, Harry drew back his coat, and Ruth, taking a pin

from her mother, attached the bit of ribbon to his waistcoat.

"Now," said Harry, as he arose, "you must not forget I am your true knight, and am bound to obey all your commands;" and he bowed very low.

Little Ruth laughed and clapped her hands. This episode had caused much merriment to all in the little group, and was the beginning of Harry's acquaintance with Mrs. Tremaine.

He learned she was a widow; that the child had been injured in a railway accident while traveling abroad. He grew very much attached to little Ruth. He brought her books and read to her, and amused her in various ways. Sometimes she would say: "Dear Sir Knight, do you still wear my colors?" And he would show them to her.

One day the little face was drawn and pinched with pain. He came upon her suddenly. She lifted her beautiful eyes to his, and said:

"Dear Sir Knight, I have been looking for you. I thought you would never come."

He took her in his arms, and she put hers around his neck and nestled her head on his breast, as she said: "Next to my mamma, I love you best, you are so good."

He held her for an hour while she slept. When the nurse told Mrs. Tremaine, the tears sprang to her eyes.

Some days, he would come unexpectedly upon Mrs. Tremaine, and she, for a time, would abandon herself to the hour. She was not the kind of woman that had nothing to say. On the contrary, she was a brilliant conversationalist, and fond of Art and Literature. She was well read and had traveled extensively. Such hours were delightful to Harry; but they were rare. Sometimes, days would elapse without his more than catching a glimpse of her. She had a piano in her room, and occasionally he heard

her singing. She had a rich contralto voice, beautifully cultivated. She never could be persuaded to sing in the parlor. One day little Ruth said:

"Mamma only sings for me, in our room."

Harry grew discontented, ill at ease, positively unhappy. He was filled with doubt, not of her, but of himself. There had grown within him an overmastering desire for her. He knew she had a heart, but he doubted his power to reach it. He was certainly in love. He felt that his only happiness would be in possessing her.

There was still a doubt in regard to Ruth's injuries. At first, the physicians had thought that there was no hope. Then, they concluded to try certain remedies, and held out a very faint hope to which the mother clung.

The day came for the final consultation, and they were obliged to admit that there was no chance for recovery. The child might live many years, but she would be a helpless cripple.

When the last thread of hope was snapped, it seemed to be more than Mrs. Tremaine could bear. She kept her room for days, and Harry felt that there was being enacted over again the same scene he had witnessed that first night. It nearly drove him mad. He longed to go to her. His arms ached to fold her in loving embrace. In short, his heart hungered for her, hungered to take her in his arms and tell her he understood her sorrow, and ask to share it with her. He wrote her a letter of condolence, carefully concealing his feelings. He sent her flowers and devoted himself to Ruth, whom the nurse brought on the lawn each day for the air. He did everything he could to let Mrs. Tremaine know of his sympathy, and that she was in his mind. He received a beautiful note of thanks for his kindness. How he treasured it—the first and only thing he ever had received from her. He read it

over and over. She wrote a strong, bold hand, as full of character as her face.

Mrs. Tremaine again had made her appearance among the guests; but Harry had been unable to get a word with her alone. Several times, after performing some little office for Ruth, the look of gratitude in the mother's face sent the blood tingling through his veins, and started a strange commotion in his heart, wholly unknown to him before. His mind was a chaos.

Harry entered the drawing-room, unobserved, just when Gertrude was talking to Ruth. He sat where he was concealed from them by the piano. He felt sick at heart. He leaned his head listlessly and wearily on his hand. He was wishing he might speak to Mrs. Tremaine alone. He heard her grant Ruth's request, and watched the children leave the room. He waited a moment, then arose, intending to go to her. She was sitting in a large arm-chair, with her back to him. She held her handkerchief to her eyes, and he saw she was weeping. He hesitated to intrude upon her. But his longing got the better of him, and going up to her, he leaned over and pronounced her name:

"My dear Mrs. Tremaine."

His voice was like the touch of a galvanic battery. She started up, and made an effort to recover herself, and said:

"Oh, Mr. Burbank! I beg pardon. I did not see you. How weak you must think me!"

"Indeed I do not. You would be less than human if you did not feel as you do. I am so glad of this opportunity to speak to you alone; to be able to tell you of my sympathy."

"You are very kind. I appreciate it, believe me."

All this seemed so trifling. His heart was overflowing, and he exclaimed:

"I have wanted to tell you more, to tell you how dear you have become to me."

Rising hastily, she cried: "You must not speak to me like this! It is madness."

"Can it be madness for me to tell you I love you? This is no sudden thing for me. I have loved you for weeks, and lingered here to be near you. During this time I have learned to love you as I never thought it possible to love any woman."

"Oh, Mr. Burbank, I beseech you, spare me! Do not say more!" desperately exclaimed Mrs. Tremaine.

"But I *must* tell you how dear you have become to me. Why is it you shun me so?"

"Not now—not now. You must not say more now."

"It is true I did not intend to speak of my love just now. Indeed, there are reasons why I should not. But when I heard the doctors' verdict in regard to little Ruth, and saw your sorrow, I could refrain no longer. And now I ask you to become my wife. Let me be your protector, and help you to care for your little daughter, of whom I have seen more than I have her mother, and for whom I already care as if she were my own."

His voice was trembling in its intense earnestness. His hand, his fortune, all would be hers. Her child would have his care, his love. She heard it all. Her soul was struggling like a bird in a cage—struggling for light and air and freedom. She stood with beating heart, breathless, hardly able to stand. She saw Paradise gates open for one brief moment, then close, as it seemed forever; as she remembered. For a moment her face had been illumined; but it was only for a moment, and then

the look was displaced by one of anguish that swept over it as she replied:

"You know not what you ask. You must not talk in that way. Indeed you must not."

"Why not?" eagerly questioned Harry.

"There are reasons why I cannot hear such words now. Believe me, I appreciate and thank you; but it cannot be. Remember, you do not even know me."

"I know that I love you," said Harry eagerly. "That is enough for me. I ask to know nothing that would grieve you. But I beseech you, tell me. Is it because you cannot love me?" he questioned anxiously. He was trembling. He was tortured with love and uncertainty. His heart was throbbing like a drum.

She hesitated a moment, then turned to him, stretched out her hand, which he clasped in his own as she said:

"I can tell you this much: that I regard you more deeply than any one I ever have known. Your kindness and consideration during these weeks of suffering and suspense, have been very grateful to me, and I desire to express my gratitude. More than that I have no right to give; more than that you must not ask." She turned away.

"But Berenice, I——"

"You say you love me?"

"I adore you."

"Prove it. Go. Leave me."

He stooped and kissed her hand, then turned and left the room. He was as pale as death. He almost fell over a man whom he met at the door. He did not see who it was, he was so absorbed in his own feelings.

When Mrs. Tremaine was left alone, she sank back into the chair from which she had risen, and said softly to herself:

"He loves me, he loves me! Oh, can it be wrong to joy in a love that never can know fruition?"

For weeks past, her heart that had long beat tranquilly, would bound at a thought, and send the bright crimson to her cheek. All within her had suddenly wakened to life, kindling the deep passion of love. She knew, now, that what she had supposed to be love, was but the almost sisterly regard and pure affection of a girlish heart; and that it had not expired on the altar where this deep, absorbing love had sprung into life; but still burned and would ever burn in her soul—this true, deep love for that brave boy-husband. Set apart and sacred it would ever be—pure and holy, the boy and school-girl affection. But now the woman had displaced the girl, and it was now the man and the woman, soul to soul.

Could Harry have seen the look on her face, as she sank back on the chair, his heart would have been triumphant. But even as it was, her last words had sent a hope to his heart that she was not wholly indifferent to him.

"She is the only woman I have ever loved. To win her and make her my wife shall be the goal for which I shall work."

He wrote her a note, begging her, for the present, to forget what had occurred, and that they might meet, as usual, adding that any other condition would render him most unhappy. He received a brief reply, complying with his wishes.

CHAPTER XII.

THE REUNION OF OLD FRIENDS.

CHARLES and General Starkweather soon reached the hotel. The years had made but little change in either of them. The general was much the same—a trifle grayer, but just as erect, and still distinguished for his courtliness of manner and address.

Mary's troubles had passed over like the clouds that fret the summer sky. She was a little more of a woman and less of a girl. Nature had made her beautiful and good, and had given her a love for womanly duties and womanly tastes. Her face was like spring sunshine; her eyes as blue as the summer heavens.

The love between Mary and Charles was such that it dominated each of their lives. It would be strong through life and strong in death. But they controlled it, nor allowed it to make them selfish.

As for Charles, he now was a full-fledged man, strong physically and mentally, and as optimistic as ever. His success had been phenomenal. He was said to have reached the "top notch" of his profession. The top crest of the wave of politics had caught him, and he had plunged in with a fervor that characterized all he did. Some predicted that he would be carried off his feet, as is frequently

the case in sudden prosperity. But no. Cool and collected he stood, willing to see both sides, and ready to take advantage only of whatever seemed to be best for his country's good.

Charles had a maiden aunt, who, recently dying, had left him the bulk of her large fortune. The man to whom this aunt had been engaged, died, leaving her heir to all he possessed. At the time it did not seem to be of so much value, as it consisted mainly of land in the district now known as "Harlem." But, as the city grew northward, this land increased in value until it made her a very rich woman. She never married. And, as Charles was her favorite nephew, after generously remembering other members of his family, she bequeathed everything to him —real estate, bonds and mortgages, and her palatial residence on Fifth Avenue. There was a clause in the will stating it was his aunt's desire that he should retain this residence for his personal use, and, if possible, for the descendants of his family. She had lived much abroad, and being a woman of superior tastes, she had collected, from time to time, many valuable articles of virtu, treasures of Art and of Literature; and to visit her home was to have a glimpse of many rare and beautiful things. So, that now, in addition to Mablethorp, Mary and Charles had a handsome home in New York City. Charles had also recently purchased a place at Willow Springs for Mary, in order that she might carry out a project long in her mind; and they now had come to take possession of this new home.

The general went to his room, saying that he would meet them in the drawing-room.

When Mary saw Charles, she exclaimed: "Do you know, I believe I am childish in my eagerness to see our new home. Have you been over there?"

"Yes, and the furniture is all in. Almost everything is completed. I tell you, it looks fine, and I feel sure that you will be pleased with it. Malcolm and Trixey have done wonders. The contractors say it will be complete and in order, and that we can step into it Monday morning. All the servants are there, and the cottagers are arriving rapidly. Trixey says every one of your orders has been carried out. She says people are awful inquisitive about the place," concluded Charles, laughing.

"You would have laughed," replied Mary, "if you could have heard the landlady, here, giving me a description of the place. They already have the most exaggerated reports in circulation."

"What would they say if they knew you were at the head of it?"

Mary laughed merrily as she replied:

"I smile every time I think of what the denouement will be, when it is discovered. Just imagine Dr. Malridge and Colonel Eversoll! They are so far apart—and this is far from either of them. And then, Society!" and she held up her hands. "My! won't it be shocked!" Again her laugh rang out, and in it she was joined by Charles; for in their imagination they pictured the consternation of the friends.

"However," said Mary, recovering herself, "I think it just as well not to mention it until we are ready to take possession."

"I think that the better way," said Charles. "We will just quietly go over there Monday morning, and take possession, and they can think about it after we are gone. By the way, there are hosts of our friends here. I hardly realized how popular Willow Springs was. I also met Sidney Banks, who is stopping here at this house. I believe he grows handsomer every day. He was very pleas-

ant and wished me all success politically. I am actually ashamed of it, but I can never bring myself to trust him; though now, I shall be obliged to meet him politically a good deal."

Although Mary was much the same in appearance, she had changed much in character. She was stronger, and had herself well in hand. The mention of Sidney Bank's name, or the prospect of meeting him, did not affect her in the least. Of course, none of them knew how closely he had been connected with their disaster of eight years previous, and while they did not like him, they were too broad to allow personal feeling to sway them; and so far as outward appearances went, they were always friendly.

"Oh, well, dear, never mind! He cannot hurt us. Don't think about it;" and she held up her lips for a kiss. After receiving it, she said, as she saw Charles removing his coat and making preparations for dressing: "I must find Gertrude. I will join you in the drawing-room;" and she flitted down the stairs and out on the lawn.

Meantime, Billy had returned from the springs with his charge, and had left the colonel in his favorite nook in the drawing-room, near the window. After reading for a little while, the colonel had grown drowsy, and the cool, shaded room and quiet were very conducive to a nap. So, leaning back in his chair, and placing his paper over his face, he drifted away into the Land of Nod.

Charles came down and stepping out on the piazza, stood for a moment, looking over the lawn for Mary. Not seeing her, he turned into the parlor. Coming from the bright light into the shaded room, he managed to stumble over a hassock; and in his efforts to recover himself, he struck the colonel's foot-rest. This awoke that gentleman, who, with a howl of pain, snatched up his cane and raised it to strike the transgressor, exclaiming:

"What in the dev—— By the Great Hornspoon and Isle of Saint Patmos and the Holy Mackerel! If you do that again, I'll brain you."

Charles skilfully dodged the blow, good naturedly laughing, and exclaimed: "Hold on, Colonel, hold on! You're not Abel to Cain me yet!"

"By George! I don't know about it," groaned the colonel, writhing, and trying to laugh down his pain, as he shook Charles's hand. "This is my private Pull-man car, and trespassers are not allowed."

"It's a sleeper, too, it would seem," laughed Charles. "So you're laid up, eh?"

"That's just it. I've become a damned aristocrat, and have got the gout. It's such a luxury!" said the colonel wincing with another spasm of pain. "After this, you be a little more careful, or you'll hear me do a little talented cussing."

"Well, well, I am truly sorry," said Charles. "I hope you will soon recover."

"I hope I'll soon be better, at least. I have had the comforting assurance from about a dozen physicians that I'll never be well again; that I may have my good days and my bad days; but, at my age, I cannot hope to entirely recover."

"Your age? Why! Colonel, you are still a young man."

"Thanks for the compliment; but does this look like it?" returned the colonel, smiling and running his fingers through his hair, and patting the top of his bald head. "But I confess this lame foot of mine is the first thing that made me begin to realize that I was growing old. It seems to be a family affliction. For generations back in my family, as far as I know anything about it, the male portion grew old, had the gout, and died; and you see, I am just trying to keep up the family tradition."

"Well, Colonel, this won't do. You must get well—not better, but well. I'll have to send my wife to talk to you."

"If any one could make me well, I think it would be she and her blue-eyed baby. Ah! Charlie, old boy, I want to congratulate you all over again. Your wife is more charming than ever. I was here when she arrived."

"And our little girl, has she not——"

But he did not finish; for, looking up, he caught sight of Harry who had just entered the room.

"Well, whom have we here? Harry Burbank as I live! Why, Hal, you old sardine, how are you?" This was the elegant greeting of Charles as he clasped Harry's hand and clapped him on the back.

"Charlie Thornton, by all that's good! Of all men in the world, I would rather see you. Colonel, this *is* a pleasure."

"Yes, I knew they were coming, but did not tell you. I thought the surprise would be good for you," said the colonel, eyeing him critically.

"Well, I think you're right; it has done me good already. Accept my thanks," replied Harry, half laughing. "But where is your wife—your adored Mary?"

"I hear her voice, now, on the piazza," said Charles, going to the door and calling: "Mary, come and greet an old friend."

"Oh, Harry, how glad I am to see you!" exclaimed Mary, coming forward and giving him her hand in greeting. "Where have you been keeping yourself this long time?"

"Oh, I have been bobbing about, the same as usual. This darling, how she grows," said Harry, catching up Gertrude and kissing her.

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed the general, as he entered the room; "if this doesn't look like a house-party!" and

he hastened forward to greet the colonel and Harry. The meeting between the colonel and the general was always fervent; but it was unusually so now, on account of the colonel's affliction.

The general drew up a chair, and Mary seated herself on a hassock, declaring she would sit at the feet of Wisdom. Gertrude came up to the colonel, and began to snuggle up to him, as he put his arm around her, calling her his girlie-girlie.

"What is the matter with your foot?"

"I was about to ask the same question," said Mary. "Gertrude has anticipated me. Come, tell us all about it, Colonel."

"More than three years ago, I ruptured a muscle above the ankle-joint. For a while, by bandaging it, I got along pretty well. Afterward, it became swollen and was extremely painful. For weeks I suffered intensely. The physicians thought, at first, it was due to the ruptured muscle; but finally they decided it was gout. I have been on crutches nearly two years; have tried all kinds of climates and altitudes; have had a dozen physicians; have tried all kinds of medicinal waters; electricity; liniments; and everything. Finally, I came here to consult Dr. Cline, the celebrated German specialist, only to hear him confirm what the other physicians have said: that the disease is so deeply rooted that I must not hope to get entirely well."

"But you shall get well!" declared Gertrude, and putting her little hands on either side of his face, and stroking it gently, said earnestly: "You want to get well, don't you?"

"I should say I do!" laughed the colonel, kissing her. "I think I feel better already. The touch of these little hands is the best medicine I have had."

"She will give you enough of that kind of medicine!" laughed the general. "She is a regular blarney. She is a romp, though, and you would better keep her at arms' length."

"Oh, Grandpapa! you're a fibber," cried Gertrude, flying at him, with radiant face, and giving him a number of small punches that he received with a great show of resistance, at last catching her in his arms and nearly smothering her with kisses; for this baby girl was the light of his eyes.

Mary turned from this interruption to the colonel, and the general heard her saying:

"But we have you now, and are going to keep you, for the present, at least."

"It's well you added the last clause. You can't depend on him," said the general in an amused voice. "You can only count on him for the present. I go up to town to see him, and hear he is in the Land of the Palmetto. I wander down there for a visit with him, and, incidentally, to enjoy the tropical climate, and find he is sojourning at the Golden Gate. It always makes me think of a lecture I once heard him deliver, in which he complained that the ghosts would not remain quiet long enough to be properly examined, but kept up an eternal flitting, flitting."

"Colonel, I was not aware you were getting such a bad reputation," laughed Harry. "You must reform."

"Oh! he is not getting it; he always has had it. And as for reform it's an inelegant adage, but a true one, that 'you can't teach an old dog new tricks,'" said General Starkweather. "Why, years ago, when he first thought of settling in business, he flitted from city to city—Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York. I never have been able to tell why he chose New York."

"Chicago is such a thriving, go-ahead place," said

Charles. "I have always thought I should like it. How did it come, Colonel, that you did not remain there?"

"I found that in order to become an orthodox Chicagoan, I must date the rise of my illustrious house from the great Chicago fire, and must have inwrought into my coat-of-arms, 'the Cow, the Kerosene Lamp, and Mrs. O'Leary.' The honor was overwhelming. Besides, I could not stand the hells and smells," humorously replied the colonel, in his characteristic manner. "The smells were obvious; and while I did not see the hells, I heard about them—through the *Eastern* papers. *They* knew all about them, and they declared Chicago's sins smelt to heaven. Why after the great Chicago fire, it all came out what a terrible place it was. I did not dare to stay there for fear of contamination; and besides, I felt I was not equal to the missionary work that would be required of me. Why, even Boston wagged her Puritanic head and declared that the sins of the Windy City were as numerous as the stars in the firmament; and likened her scourging to that of Sodom and Gomorrah, declaring that she had to be purified by fire. No," continued the colonel, "I couldn't stay in such a wicked place."

"But," said Mary, "I thought Boston had a big fire soon after Chicago's conflagration. It must have been rather severe to have their words come home to them so soon."

"My dear child," replied the colonel with much solemnity, "Chicago might weep for her past transgressions, but with Boston it was different. They had but to fold their hands and take to themselves that beautiful and comforting text: 'Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth!'"

There was a general laugh at the colonel's scriptural interpretation of the two great historical fires.

"But Philadelphia, what——"

"My dear Charles, I could not make an affidavit that I

was even remotely connected with Penn, and that barred me out. And as for Boston——"

"Yes, yes! Tell us why Boston did not suit you," queried Mary. "Dear, dear old Boston, how I love it! It is so broad, so liberal, so true."

"Yes, my dear," replied the colonel. "That's true; but they're so devilishly aware of it!"

"But I should have thought their liberality would just have suited you to a very large T," Mary remarked.

"I don't know about that," replied the colonel doubtfully. "Boston always makes me think of the Episcopal Church, which makes such broad claims to liberality. When you go to join it, though, you find out you are obliged to believe in the Creed and the Trinity. So it is with Boston. You must believe in the Boston Trinity and the Boston Creed, or be damned Bostonially."

This assertion brought another laugh and eager inquiries as to what was contained in the Boston Creed.

"Well, before you can become one of the elect," answered the colonel, "you must be able to stand in the center of Copley Square, and, with your head uncovered and your face turned toward the Back Bay, you must solemnly say:

"'I believe in the infallibility of Boston, and am willing to be judged thereby. I believe in Boston being the Hub round which the universe revolves; and in the spokes therein, which represent every known branch of culture, science, and all esthetic arts. I believe implicitly in Boston's past and future'—now, interpreted in English, that means the quick and the dead.—'I believe in green bags for gentlemen, and gray bags' (full of God knows what) 'for ladies. I believe in the Holy Back Bay.' Now, when you say this, you must make three salaams. Then you must say the Trinity:

"'I believe in the holy, nutritive, and intellectual qual-

ities of Baked Beans and Brown Bread, and in the one, only, and infallible newspaper in the world, *The Boston Evening Transcript.'*

"Then you must make four more salaams to the four quarters of the globe. When you have done this, you are then fit to enter into the Holy of Holies and all the Mysteries therein. I am told it's wonderful when you get it. But it was too intricate for me. I couldn't stand it," declared the mirth-provoking, jolly colonel.

The colonel's humorous analysis of Boston's and Chicago's requirements, was greeted with a shout of laughter, and he looked around, surprised to find that there had been an addition of three persons to their number since he began. They were all young, and known to those present: Miss Isabel Stevens, of Boston, Miss Edith Brandt and Richard Braintree, of New York—the two last being leaders in Gotham's smart set.

On entering the room and hearing the colonel's voice, they had enjoined silence until he had finished. Then they all came forward, laughing heartily. The colonel grasped Miss Stevens's hand, exclaiming:

"What an old duffer I am!—awfuly stupid of me, and I take it all back."

"Oh, I'll never forgive you," she answered with a smile, "for maligning Boston, only on one condition."

"Pray, what is that? I am ready to do anything except get on my knees, and I'd do that, if it weren't a physical impossibility."

"Tell us why you chose New York."

"Oh, that's easy!" exclaimed the colonel. "You know, I had been likened to a wild beast, a devouring lion. And as soon as I got into the menagerie, among the Bulls and Bears, I recognized the truth of it; for I felt perfectly at home. In New York, it's every fellow for himself, and

the devil catch the hindmost. So, there always is a scramble for front seats. You know, it keeps things lively. Am I forgiven?" asked the colonel of Miss Stevens.

Her answer was lost in the laughter and the separating of the little group, as they adjourned to the dining-room for the midday luncheon.

Their entrance caused quite a flutter among the other guests.

One incident occurred, during luncheon, worthy of mention. At the table, Mary occupied a chair between Harry and Gertrude. Harry heard Gertrude telling her mother about Ruth. He felt what a boon the friendship of such a woman as Mary would be to Mrs. Tremaine; and when Gertrude exclaimed:

"Dear mamma, as soon as dinner is over, you must go with me to see the little girl and her beautiful mother." Harry said:

"Let me join my entreaties to Gertrude's."

Then he gave Mary a full account of little Ruth's illness, and finished by saying:

"The child is such a patient little sufferer, that she has quite won my heart; and her mother is so deeply attached to her that she has suffered agonies of suspense. Now that she knows that the case is hopeless, you can imagine what a state of mind she must be in. And I bespeak for her your tenderest sympathy."

"She shall have that, and my best endeavors in *relief of pain* to her dear one. You must take me to her at once," said Mary, rising, for they now had finished luncheon.

Harry did not quite take in the full meaning of Mary's words when she said: "In relief of pain;" but he said warmly:

"I knew I could depend upon you."

Mary excused herself from the rest of their party, and

she and Harry went to a small sitting-room on the second floor, where Harry wrote a note to Mrs. Tremaine, telling her he wanted her to meet a friend of his, and asking her to bring Ruth.

Mrs. Tremaine soon made her appearance, followed by the nurse with Ruth. Mary was sitting with her back to the door. Mrs. Tremaine had a bright flush on her face, and was evidently a little nervous at meeting Harry so soon after the event of the morning. Mary arose as Harry said:

"Mrs. Tremaine, let me present you to my best friend, Mrs. Thornton."

Mary stepped forward and took her hand. For one brief instant, Mrs. Tremaine stood as if rooted to the spot. She had turned deadly pale. Then, by a mighty effort, she recovered, and murmuring Mary's name, she sank into the chair that Harry hastily brought forward. He thought her agitation due to meeting him. Mary thought it was due to over-anxiety and watching. Neither guessed the true cause. Yet, Mary kept saying over and over in her mind:

"Who is it she reminds me of?—such a sad, sweet face."

Harry excused himself and left them together.

When Mrs. Tremaine realized that Mary did not associate her with the woman of eight years previous, her self-possession returned, and she chatted freely with her about Ruth. How her heart went out to Mary! She could hardly restrain her tears, as she listened to her words of solicitude. She knew it was real, true, womanly sympathy, and not curiosity. Mary sympathized deeply with Mrs. Tremaine—just as she had eight years before. And it touched this lonely woman's soul, now, as it did then.

When Mary arose and asked Mrs. Tremaine to let the

nurse take Ruth to her room and leave her there for a while, she gladly consented.

When Mary reached her rooms, she found Charles stretched on the lounge in her bedroom, near an open window, with his coat off, and looking decidedly sleepy. He held out his arms to her, and pulled her down beside him, saying:

"What is it, little woman? What did you and Harry run away from us for?"

Mary kissed him fondly. Then, as she listlessly passed her fingers through her hair. she told him all about Ruth. saying:

"Come. She is now in the next room. Gertrude is with her. I have sent the nurse away. We must concentrate our energies, and see what we can do for this child. Her mother says she sleeps very little, and she can see that she is wasting away daily. We must try to relieve her."

They arose and passed into the next room and sat down by the child.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE AWAKENING OF MR. BURTON.

MARY was fond of Willow Springs. She had longed for a place of her own there; and at last her desire was to be gratified. She had spent this first day agreeably, for she had met many friends and acquantances at Willowby Rest, and others were staying at the various hotels and cottages. The day had been close and sultry; but, as the afternoon waned, a light breeze sprang up that diffused a delicious coolness throughout the atmosphere. It was most welcome. Mary had made an early toilet, intending to descend to the lawn where she could enjoy the change in the air. She always dressed well. It was an art she thoroughly understood; therefore, she was never overdressed. She was one of the few women that always looked elegant, even though her dress might be simple. She was looking particularly well on this evening. She was gowned in creamy lace through the meshes of which the silken sheen of the lining gleamed. Her neck and arms were bare save for their covering of lace. A high collar was held in place by an elegant brooch set with turquoises and pearls. A few creamy roses with pink hearts were pinned on her breast. The wavy gold-brown hair was brushed back anl loosely coiled on her neck. It would be a weary journey one would have to take before finding her equal.

Her tall, slender figure was exquisitely moulded. Her skin was pink and white and smooth as satin. She was unquestionably and unmistakably feminine. There is a marked difference in a woman with strength of mind and a "strong-minded" woman. Mary had strength of mind. Under that unassuming, womanly dignity by which she was distinguished, was a latent power. One saw it in the poise of her head, in the firm, elastic step; but, most of all, in her beautiful, long, slender, white hands. Never were hands more eloquent. There were whole volumes in them. They were so strong. They were the kind of hands that, prompted by a noble heart, could draw one up to heaven; but serving an evil soul, could cast one down to hell. She was a remarkable woman. Her manner constantly grew in impressiveness; and to stand in her presence, was to feel her influence and power.

Mary was anticipating a delightful summer. She was making a higher effort than merely to kill time; and a smile of contentment and pleasure illumined her face as she thought of it.

Her reverie was disturbed by her maid who brought her a card. It was from Charles, asking her to come to the drawing-room. She hastened to obey the summons, and found him talking to a gentleman whom he introduced as Mr. Burton. Mary soon discovered he was the father of Carl.

Charles had been slightly acquainted with Mr. Burton for a long time, and was quite surprised to find him located at the Springs. After a few moments of conversation, Charles arose and said:

"I am going to leave you and Mr. Burton to become acquainted; and you will excuse me, as I have a gentleman waiting to see me in the office;" and he left the room.

Mr. Burton began conversation by apologizing to Mary

for Carl's rudeness. A full account of the scene in the morning had been repeated to him by both the nurse and the landlady, and evidently greatly embellished. Mary thought the least said about it, the better, and merely remarked that no apology was necessary, and that she was much interested in the child. She was about to turn the conversation into another channel, when the voice of a man speaking to Carl, who was playing in the vestibule, came to them:

"There you are, you young rascal!"

"Well, what is it to you? It's none of your business, smarty," quickly responded Carl.

"There, did you hear that!" exclaimed Mr. Burton with an ugly frown. And, in a twinkling, he had Master Carl by the arm, and had started with the struggling child toward the stairs to take him to his room. From the look in the father's face, Mary could easily guess what would follow. It was an awful moment for her. She, a stranger, to interfere between parent and child, looked like presumption, and had so much the air of, "See, I am better than thou." But in her strong sense of justice and right, she instantly forgot everything else, as she saw the child's terror-stricken face as the incensed parent dragged him along. She was at Mr. Burton's side instantly, and placing her hand on his arm, she exclaimed in a voice of suppressed excitement:

"Mr. Burton!"

What was it in the voice that arrested the man's action? He relaxed his hold.

"Mr. Burton, will you let me take Carl?" And instantly the boy clung to her.

"Gertrude," she called to the child, who, hearing Carl scream, had appeared on the scene, "will you go with Carl to my room and remain until I come? Go, Carl,"

she said, pushing him toward the stairs, which the boy quickly mounted, only too glad to escape.

"Mr. Burton," said Mary in a trembling voice and with heightened color, "I must ask your pardon for my interference in your affairs; but I could not help it."

"Don't apologize, Mrs. Thornton," said Mr. Burton in a kindly voice. "I presume you are like lots of women—couldn't bear to see the boy whipped. But it's the only thing that will do in Carl's case."

"Oh, it was not so much the thought of the physical suffering, although to me that is awful. It is the terrible injustice of it."

"Injustice? My dear madam, I appreciate your tenderness of heart, but you don't understand him. For one of his age, he is one of the most headstrong, wilful boys I ever saw. I cannot have it. He shall be obedient and respectful to his elders, if I have to tan the skin off his back."

Mary, glancing up, saw in the determined look on his face, and the flashing of his eyes—the iron will of the man. Then she thought of the wilful boy who was an exact reproduction of the father, and she felt that life between these two, would be war to the knife. Could she say anything? Could she do anything? Had she not heard, already, the child exclaim to the landlady, in a fit of defiance: "I don't care for you, nor for my father, nor for my mother, nor anybody." With a desire for strength and guidance to help both father and child, she asked:

"Why are you not as ready to defend the child as to punish him?"

"Defend him?" asked Mr. Burton in a surprised voice. "Against what?"

"Against insult and imposition."

"From whom?" questioned Mr. Burton.

"Did you not hear the child insulted?" asked Mary.

"My dear Mrs. Thornton, the man that spoke to Carl was Dr. Cline, our physician, and a perfect gentleman."

"All the more reason Carl was justified in resenting it," stoutly replied Mary.

"But my dear madam, Dr. Cline did not mean anything unkind, and Carl's impudence was unpardonable."

"Not more so than Dr. Cline's uncalled-for remark. How did the child know he did not mean it? I think Carl did know he meant it—just as *I* know he meant it. But it's a way even well-bred people have of speaking to defenseless children. No matter what *their* opinion might be of a grown person they would not dare express it; but the bravest men, even, have a way of speaking in this manner to helpless children. It's the acme of cowardice. I have been here only a few hours; but in that time, I have heard a dozen expressions, such as: 'There goes that little rat.' 'He is the worst kid in seven counties.' 'Little snipe!' These from the landlady, his nurse, and even the servants. And I say boldly that I like and admire Carl for defending himself, as it would seem he has no one to defend him. He has in his little body the material of which heroes are made."

Mary had not raised her voice; but it was intense with suppressed excitement. The color deepened on her cheek, as it always did when she was greatly agitated; and at this moment her sensitive nostrils quivered, and her eyes flashed with righteous indignation. Her control was wonderful. Mr. Burton sank into a chair and gazed at her. She looked like a queen as she stood there, the soft folds of her lace gown clinging to her figure.

"Pardon me," she said hastily, "I have not intended to

interfere in your affairs; but I am interested in Carl, and——"

She hesitated. Mr. Burton still sat gazing at her.

"May I keep Carl with me a few days? It may be a relief to his mother."

"You may," he said without removing his eyes from her face.

A low murmured, "Thank you;" and she turned and left the room.

Mr. Burton did not move for a minute; then he exclaimed:

"My God, my God! and I thought I was doing my duty." He buried his face in his hands.

Edward Burton was a man between thirty-five and forty years of age; cultured, quiet, and reserved. He was possessed of the highest ideals of duty and justice; he was also possessed to the fullest degree of the sense of the responsibility imposed upon him in the bringing up of a boy.

He married early in life the daughter of a Southern planter. She was like a tropical bird, joyous and gay, and he was passionately devoted to her. When Carl was two years old, they were spending a week in the country. There was a swing near the house in which his wife was in the habit of sitting by the hour, reading. One day, becoming weary of her book, she flung it aside and called to one of the negro servants that happened to be passing, to swing her. He gave her a push that sent her flying through the air; and laughing, she called to him:

"Higher! Swing me higher!"

Mr. Burton was reclining on the grass, under the shade of a tree, reading. He looked up at the sound of his wife's voice, and she exclaimed:

"This is delicious. I feel as if I were flying!"

As she uttered the words the rope broke, and she fell to the ground.

It would be impossible to describe the anguish that came to Mr. Burton when his wife was picked up for dead. He had never known his capacity for suffering until then. To him, this precious little wife seemed the other half of his soul.

Friends said that it was his tenderness that had kept her alive, and he had heard this and believed it, and took great pride in it. To keep all care from her was the object of his life, she had been such a sufferer. But now, his pride suddenly was torn to shreds. He was passing through a storm of feeling new to him.

In the mad rush of business events, and in his anxiety for his wife, he had had little time to think of the child. He supposed force to be the only way to control Carl. He was such a perplexing, noisy, rollicking youngster.

Mr. Burton sat thus, for a while, with his head bowed. Then he arose and went to his room.

If Mrs. Thornton had flown into a temper, given him a lecture, and called him a brute, which he now felt that he was, it would have been a relief to think of it. But she did not. She had spoken to him as if he ought to be a thinking gentleman. She had spoken in defense of the child—*his* child that it was his duty to look after. She said that Carl had the stuff in him of which brave men were made. And how was he moulding that material? He was using force and beating him as a cruel master would beat a horse. Indeed, he would not beat his horse; for he had studied horses, and knew that that was not the way to manage them. But how much had he really studied his boy? He would come home, after a day's worry with the details of business, to find a sick wife, whose querulous complaints of the child and the stories of disobedience

from the nurse would at once cause him to resort to the switch, without further inquiry. Only the day before, he had given the boy a terrible whipping for striking the nurse and hitting Dr. Cline with an apple. He reflected now, that as he sent the child from him to be put to bed, he had a satisfied feeling and a sense of duty done.

What was it, in the few words spoken by this woman, that had torn the veil from his eyes and caused him to see, as if a panorama had been unrolled before him, the incidents connected with Carl's life from his birth? Suddenly it seemed as if he heard the cry of terror in the child's voice when he was about to be whippped. He heard—nay, felt—the stinging blows on the tender flesh; and he recalled the set look of sullen hate that came into the face of the boy as the cruel blows ceased, and he was sent supperless to bed.

All this came vividly before him—and more; he remembered the angriest he had ever been in his life was once when he found a groom whipping his favorite, high-stepping, mettlesome horse. The man had the animal by the bit so that he was helpless, and was raining the blows upon him. That groom could never come near that horse again, and had to be discharged. Mr. Burton never tired of telling his friends of the intelligence and sensitiveness of the animal, and how, at the sound of the groom's voice, he would grow restive, and snort and snap viciously.

Why did this picture now unroll before him? He suddenly realized that he had been treating his high-stepping, mettlesome boy the same way that the groom had treated his horse.

"God, O God, forgive me!" cried this man, as he sank on the sofa, and buried his face in his hands. He sat there, immovable, many minutes. But his mind was a whirlwind. No one to defend his child No one to shield

him from insult. He had never thought about a *child's* being insulted. But why not? Had they no title to respect from their elders?

Suddenly he heard the voice of the nurse inquiring for Carl. He called her to him, and said:

"Carl is in Mrs. Thornton's room. Go to Mrs. Thornton and tell her that I want Carl for a few minutes; but that he may return."

He soon heard the nurse returning, scolding the boy as they came along, saying: "Your father will give you a good whipping." Then he heard Carl's threat:

"Wait, Missy, till I get you alone. I'll give it to you in the neck."

"You will, will you?" exclaimed the nurse. "I'll tell him what you say."

"Tell him. Shoot off your lip for a week. I don't care!" slangily exclaimed Carl in defiance. "Allee samee, everything goes. I don't care for a whipping. I'd take one any day to get a chance to kick you."

But in spite of his defiant tone, Carl did not seem in a hurry to reach his father; and there began a struggle between him and his nurse as she urged him along with threats of punishment.

Mr. Burton had heard just this kind of talk before. Not a word of slang did Carl hear but he immediately adopted it. Mr. Burton had been greatly perplexed by it. Before, in such a scene as this, he only had seen a vicious, rebellious boy; and the punishment had always been harder for Carl. Now, the tones of the boy's voice sounded different to the father. Although the language was bad, he only heard the boy standing up against the nurse for his own rights. Sure enough! What right had the nurse to threaten and domineer over him, especially where others could hear her? He understood, in

an instant, how the boy had been humiliated, and he wondered he was not worse.

Mr. Burton stepped to the door and called Carl. He took him by the hand and led him into the room, leaving him standing in the middle of the floor. Then, he sat down and looked at him. Carl stood in a sullen and defiant attitude, with his eyes cast down, expecting, no doubt, the whipping that he had escaped a little while before. Every fibre of his body seemed full of resentment, and, as the father looked at him, he realized how cruelly the child had been treated; and his heart went out to him in a great love and longing, such as he never before had felt for the boy.

"Carl," said Mr. Burton, "Carl!"

The second time he pronounced the name, the child looked into his father's face with a strange, questioning look coming into his eyes at the changed tone of his father's voice.

"Carl, come here." And, as the boy still stood immovable, Mr. Burton stretched out his hand, and said: "Come. Don't be afraid."

Mr. Burton's voice was one of entreaty. The child felt it, and stepped to him quickly. Mr. Burton placed both arms around the boy and hugged him close. For a moment, there was stillness in the room, and thoughts and resolutions were born that floated straight to the great white Throne, there to remain forever as resplendent jewels.

After a little silence, Mr. Burton loosened his hand upon Carl, and the child, looking down, saw something glistening on his hand. It was a tear. *He* had not been crying. Where had it come from? Drawing back, he looked into his father's face, and saw his eyes were overflowing. In-

stantly his arms were around his father's neck, and he exclaimed in deep concern:

"Oh, don't cry, papa. I'm not mad at you!"

The child's words pierced him like a sword-thrust. What love! All his harsh words and cruel blows forgiven in a moment at the sight of his tears! Had he been letting this great love slip away from him into an eternity of indifference? Could any love be more unselfish or more perfect than this? Again he drew his child to his breast; and, as Carl rested his cheek against his own, he felt between himself and boy, a silent sympathy, a thought-communion, a faith unbounded, and an understanding that needed no words nor explanations. Sitting there in the twilight of the room, it seemed as if the past shut up like a book; and although so young, the soul of his child seemed to speak to his soul, and say: "Our joys, our sorrows, enhanced or lessened, should be the same. Take me to your heart, and let Love be our guide."

Mr. Burton loosened his clasp, and tenderly brushing away the child's tears, he stood the boy before him, and said:

"Carl, you are now a big boy. You are now eight years old. I want to tell you something. Will you try to remember it?"

At the word, *big,* emphasized by his father, Carl visibly drew himself up, and replied, in his characteristic manner:

"You bet your life, I'll remember."

"All right," said his father, smiling. "It is this: Yesterday I whipped you. I have whipped you a good many times, have I not?"

"Yes, sir," slowly said Carl, his countenance falling, as he remembered those whippings. Besides, this was not what he had expected to hear. He thought his father had

something nice to tell him; and now, he must go to talking about old whippings and things. He hated whippings and his nurse and most everything, and didn't want to think about them. His face darkened. Mr. Burton noticed the change in the child's expression, and felt he could read what was in his mind.

"I did it, Carl, because I thought it was the way to make you a good boy, so you would grow up into a good man. You want to be a good man, don't you?"

"I guess so," said Carl, half doubtfully.

"My boy," said Mr. Burton, taking the child by the hand, "I think I was mistaken, and I am sorry for every whipping I ever gave you. I promise you never to whip you again, and I want you to come here and tell me that you will try and forgive me for every blow I ever struck you."

Mr. Burton looked straight into the child's eyes. It was all so sudden, such a complete change from anything he ever had experienced, that Carl was absolutely embarrassed at this confession from his father. He did not know what to do or say. His face crimsoned painfully, and for the moment, a good sharp switching would have been a relief to the poor, bewildered child. He could be saucy and strike back, or submit in sullen silence to superior strength; but this sort of thing was too much for him, and his lip began to quiver.

"You can't forgive me, just yet, I know," said Mr. Burton, drawing Carl to him and stroking his head; "but you will promise me you will try, won't you?"

This was too much for poor, little Carl whose heart was hungry and starved for love and tenderness. And actually seeing tears again in his father's eyes, he was in his arms in a moment, sobbing as if his little heart would break, saying:

"Oh, don't cry, papa. I don't mind the whippings. I only love you a big lot, and I don't care for anything at all, so I don't."

Mr. Burton drew a chair to him, and placed the boy in it. Then he said:

"Now, Carl, I want you to think you are pretty nearly a man. I said I wasn't going to whip you and I won't; but I want you to try and be an obedient, good boy."

"All right," said Carl, mopping his face with his handkerchief.

"We won't talk anything more about this now," said Mr. Burton. "I'm going to let you remain with Mrs. Thornton for two days; but you must be good and not give her trouble."

Carl's eyes began to dance at the mention of Mary's name.

"I tell you, papa,' exclaimed Carl, "she's a peach—a regular utter."

Mr. Burton did not even chide Carl for his slangy expressions; but merely smiled indulgently. As he touched the bell, Fanny, the nurse, appeared, and he said:

"Brush Carl up in good shape. He is going back to Mrs. Thornton's room;" and as Carl bounded out of the room, he added in a very decided tone: "I don't want to hear Carl fighting with you. See that you take care not to brush his feathers the wrong way."

The words were said pleasantly, but there was a peculiar tone to the voice that puzzled Fanny. She was confident that Carl had not been whipped.

Carl was in a rather subdued frame of mind, and happy, for three reasons: First, because he was going to return to Mrs. Thornton's rooms where he was sure he was going to have lots of fun. Second, his father wasn't mad at him. Third, there were to be no more whippings. His

father had told him so. That was enough. He did not doubt it for a minute. He wished Fanny knew; but his instinct told him it was something sacred between himself and his father. When, however, she gave an unnecessary pull to his hair, and, with his usual impulse he retaliated, and she exclaimed:

"Carl Burton, if you don't hold still, I'll tell your father and he'll tan you good," it was with a good deal of satisfaction that he said:

"Now, if you hold your breath until he does tan me, you'll never get it again."

He said this with a victorious little taunt in his voice and a happy gleam of defiance in his eye; for Carl was a little, human, everyday boy, with a lot of "Old Adam" in him. And it was quite impossible for him to become a full-fledged angel in an hour, like the good little children we read about in books.

When Carl returned to his father, Mr. Burton gave him a note he had written to Mrs. Thornton, and Carl was off for her room like a shot.

Mr. Burton went to the office and sent the following telegram to an intelligence office in New York:

"Send me, at once, a kind woman, who is fond of children; one that is capable of teaching a boy eight years old. Liberal salary. Not accepted unless with the best of qualifications and references."

He then went to his wife's room, and found her reclining on a couch, in the middle of the apartment, and beside her sat her nurse, fanning her.

Mrs. Burton was a dainty little thing. She was dressed in a loose gown of rose silk with lace trimmings; on her feet were dainty satin slippers. Her face, that was deadly

white, was framed in by a mass of closely curling, jet-black hair. She looked up as he entered, and exclaimed in a childish voice:

"Oh, Edward! Where have you been so long?"

"I am sorry not to have come before, but I have been looking after Carl," said Mr. Burton, sitting down beside her and tenderly taking her hand.

"Oh, that dreadful boy!" she exclaimed. "I tell you, Edward, he gets worse and worse every day. He has been perfectly dreadful to-day."

"Never mind Carl, now, Kitty. I guess he will be all right."

"No, he won't. Mrs. Preston told me of the awful scene he caused in the drawing-room this morning. It was disgraceful. There is just one thing, Edward: You must send him off to school. A good, strict master will bring him to his senses, perhaps. He needs a whipping every day. I can't have him near me, he makes me so nervous."

Mr. Burton winced. His wife's words seemed so pitiless; in fact, monstrous. But he said gently:

"Now, Kitty dear, don't fret about Carl. I am going to attend to him; and we will do in the future whatever seems best for him. We will talk it over by-and-by. For the present, he is all right. Mrs. Thornton has taken a fancy to him, and wants to keep him for a few days."

"Taken a fancy to Carl!" exclaimed his wife in astonishment. "Who ever heard of such a thing?" Then she laughed. "That's the first person I ever knew to take a fancy to Carl. He seems to be the pest of the neighborhood. I have often wondered whom he takes after."

"Not after you, surely. If he is bad he must inherit it from me," said Mr. Burton gallantly.

"This Mrs. Thornton must be an odd sort of person."

"On the contrary, she is anything but odd. She is a very elegant and beautiful woman, with a noble heart. Some day you must meet her."

At this moment the servant entered with their dinner; for Mr. Burton rarely dined away from his wife, and Carl took his meals in the nursery, as he invariably upset his mother's nerves.

As Mr. Burton drew his chair to the table and helped his wife, there came to him, very vividly, a picture of a child taking his solitary meal to the accompaniment of the fault-finding voice of Fanny. As an infant, it had been customary for him to take his meals in the nursery; and as he grew larger this habit had never been changed. Had any one told Mr. Burton, twenty-four hours previous, that he was an indifferent and unfeeling parent, he would have resented it. Yet he was now convinced it was so.

Carl had every comfort that money could procure. He was sent regularly to church and Sunday-school. Having no mother's care, he always had had a good, strong woman to look after him, to read to him, to see that he was properly groomed. He was sent to all appropriate places of amusement, and provided with all kinds of toys and story-books. What more could any one do? Yet, Mr. Burton reflected, that instead of sunshine, the child had lived in the darkness of night, and his days had been cold and cheerless. He had been under a system of petty restraints and privations; of severe looks, incessant chiding, and corporal punishment He might as well have been brought up in the Desert of Sahara, so far as love—without which our lives are valueless—was concerned. It was wholly absent from his life.

Never before had Mr. Burton been so absent minded. He hardly heard the weak chatter of his sick wife. Seldom was such change wrought in a man in so short a time.

It seemed as if his life had been completely revolutionized in an hour. Mary, with her beautiful personality and purity of expression, Carl and his wrongs, his suffering wife, all were whirling in a chaotic jumble through his brain.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CHATTER OF CARL AND GERTRUDE.

When Mary left Mr. Burton, she returned to her room. She was not sorry that she had interfered; but she was sorry that necessity obliged her to do so. She felt it had placed her in a very awkward position with an entire stranger. There were certain kinds of notoriety Mary shrank from. She was not the one to preach or dictate to people. When it became absolutely necessary, she spoke her mind freely; otherwise, she let people do as they liked. She realized that, "What is one man's meat is another man's poison." She did not presume to lay down laws for others. She had her own convictions of right and wrong, and stood by them bravely. She was tolerant of every one's views, no matter how widely they differed from her own.

Mary was a reformer, in one sense of the word; but she had no precedent in her methods. She never talked nor got into controversy, nor tried to make converts. It made no difference to her whether a man was Greek, Jew, or Gentile. She was even tolerant of the apparently utterly idle and useless people in the world. Her thought always was: "They do not know. They do not realize." She had a

wonderful faculty of saying something in a few words, or of doing some little thing that awakened this particular class of unthinking people, and frequently revolutionized their lives. She did not believe in total depravity. She had an unwavering faith in humanity. No matter what the *overlay* of evil, she was firm in the conviction that under it was good in the human heart. Above all, her sympathies went out to the young—to children, to young men and women, to young mothers. In the subject of maternity she was deeply interested, and made it a profound study. She was a constant, earnest thinker. Her convictions, while not obtrusive, were decidedly pronounced.

Mary's apartment was a suite of three rooms. When she entered her sitting-room, she heard the children's voices. They were playing in the adjoining room. She passed into her bedroom and sat down. In spite of herself, something of sadness had come into her face. While sitting there in deep thought, Carl's voice came to her saying to Gertrude:

"Oh, I often wish I was a squirrel. I could run and play all day, and sleep at night, and have a pocketful of nuts, and live in a tree, and have no papa nor mamma, and do just as I pleased. Don't you think it would be a nice thing to be a squirrel and have a long tail?"

"No," said Gertrude. "My nose would be cold and I'd have hair on my back. Ugh! I'd rather be a little girl than anything. What do you want to be a squirrel for?"

"Because," said Carl, "if I had a long tail, like a squirrel, just now, I'd put red pepper on it, and wave it in my nurse's face. Wouldn't it be fun?" He laughed in glee at the thought of it. "Wouldn't she sneeze and roll over and howl! Then, I'd run up a tree, and eat nuts, and look at her, and she couldn't get me or touch me, if I were a squirrel."

Mary could not help but smile at the picture Carl conjured up, and at his evident enjoyment of it. She deplored, yet did not wonder at it. She felt that the child's life had been passed far from justice and reason and the force of kindness. She listened for Gertrude's reply to Carl; for Gertrude had seemed to see the ridiculous picture, and had joined in the laugh.

Gertrude had a lot of blocks that had just been given to her. When properly adjusted, they formed a large Chinese temple; and the children were building this up as they talked.

"Wouldn't you look gay sitting on the limb of a tree?"

"Guess I would," said Carl. Then, after a minute's silence: "I wish my nurse would fall down and break her neck."

"Oh, goodness, Carl Burton!"—and down came a number of blocks with a crash—"don't say such things, even in fun."

"I'm not in fun. I wish she would die," reiterated the incorrigible youngster.

"Why, Carl! I thought you were in fun all the time. You wouldn't hurt anybody. Don't you know that isn't nice?"

"I don't care. I don't want to be nice nor good. I don't like nice people nor good people," declared Carl.

"But don't you know that those are bad thoughts, and bad thoughts are——"

"Oh, what are you trying to give me? You don't know what you're talking about. You're only a little girl. What do you know about it?" interrupted Carl.

Gertrude was silent a moment. Then she said: "Well, Carl, wouldn't you believe mamma?"

"Of course I'd believe her. She's a dream!" said Carl, with great admiration.

Again a smile crept into Mary's face as she heard herself so classically designated.

"Well, come here to the window, and I'll show you something," said Gertrude. "Now, there aren't many clouds just now; but you see that blackest one and the two little ones sailing toward it? In a minute they will be swallowed up in the big cloud. You've watched the clouds when a big storm is coming, and you've seen the clouds crowd together, until there was a big storm with thunder and lightning, haven't you?"

"Yes; but what has that to do with your thoughts?"

"Mamma says our thoughts are just like that. If we have black thoughts we attract people to us that have black thoughts, and we keep doing that until we have all kinds of troubles, and it breaks up in disaster, just as the storm breaks up in thunder and lightning, and in cyclones, and pulls down houses, and kills people. You see the beautiful, white clouds and the little, soft, fleecy ones?" said Gertrude, pointing upward. "See how they don't pay any attention to the black clouds. Those are like our good thoughts."

"How does your mamma know about clouds and thoughts and things?" said Carl, with a little quaver of doubt in his voice.

"Because she is big and wise and knows a lot of things. I'd rather be a little white cloud," said Gertrude, dreamily gazing up into the sky, "than a black one. I would just sail on and on and never look at the black cloud. I would just keep in the golden sunshine always."

Gertrude's face was turned upward, and Carl stood looking at her; and this smart, astute youngster instinctively felt he must keep black thoughts away if he wanted to remain Gertrude's playmate. And vaguely, very vaguely, he felt the truth in what she said, although he

did not understand it. Still, in this object-lesson, there had been one seed sown—a little one, it is true. Still it was a seed. Mary felt it as Carl said:

"Well, I'll try not to think of the mean old thing."

At that moment the nurse came with the summons for Carl from Mr. Burton, which she delivered to Mary.

"Your father wants you, Carl," said Fanny.

"I'll not go!" declared Carl.

"Yes, you will; so come along," and Fanny started toward Carl.

"Don't you touch me. I'll scratch your eyes out if you do!"

"There! you see, Mrs. Thornton, how he acts. He isn't fit to play with your little girl, and——"

Mary held up her hand for silence, and then said: "Carl, come here."

Instantly the boy laid down his playthings and came and stood beside her. She took his hands and looked straight into his eyes—such beautiful, fearless eyes as the boy had!

"Carl, you must obey your father. He has sent for you, and says you may come back. Go, now, with Fanny; and Gertrude and I will wait right here until you return. Your father told me you could remain with me for a day or two. Your father is a gentleman, and he will keep his word. Go, now. The little house you have been building shall remain just as it is;" and she turned to Gertrude and said, playfully: "Miss Thornton, Manager Burton has been called out of town on business. He received a telegram, I think, and the work will have to be suspended until he returns."

This pleased Carl very much; and although he thought he was going to get a whipping, he left the room without any more trouble. The child had been outraged by this

domineering nurse until he hated her. Mary deplored the fact, yet she did not blame him. She could not imagine why Mr. Burton had sent for Carl, and she had a feeling of uneasiness in regard to it. Could it be possible he had sent for him to punish him? It was dreadful to contemplate.

Mary believed that mind, once fairly put in motion, is self-propelling, and that it is "the most potent force in the universe,"—a real, tangible force that neither walls, time, nor distance can interfere with. Therefore, she sent her thoughts as silent messengers to Mr. Burton, feeling they would be more efficacious than spoken words.

Soon Carl came bounding in, with radiant face, with the note from his father. Mary read it. It must have been, in some way, highly satisfactory; for a beautifully soft look came into her eyes. She gave a little sigh of satisfaction as she arose and tucked the note away in a safe and secret place, and was humming a little tune as Charles came in.

Mary, with all her good qualities, was at times disappointing. The note must have convinced her that she had not made a mistake. Instead of falling down on her knees, and praying aloud and thanking the All-Wise for making her an instrument in His hands in showing Carl's father the error of his ways, or going into a dark room or closet and remaining on her knees an hour or more, with Charles and the hungry children waiting for their dinner, she chatted to Charles, said funny things to the children, and sang little snatches of songs. She didn't seem to be pondering on the awful sinfulness of the world, nor to be weighed down with the thought that she might have made a mistake of some kind. Smiling, she went away to the dining-room, with Charles and the children, and drew all eyes to look and marvel at her resplendent

beauty. And when the happy, but incorrigible Carl could not resist the impulse of stepping on the cat's tail, causing it to give forth an unearthly yowl, she actually laughed. She did not even take this splendid opportunity to tell him he was wicked and that God wouldn't love him, and to ask how *he* would like to be a cat and have his tail stepped on. No; she sat there and looked as if she rather enjoyed it. She smiled, even as she said in a low tone, in reply to Gertrude's startled look:

"Never mind. It will be all right, by-and-by, dear."

What she meant by that it would be hard to tell. Possibly she referred to the cat's tail. She could not fail to hear the various expressions from tables near her own:

"That boy couldn't behave to save his life," from Dr. Cline.

"No one can manage him," from Harry Burbank.

"I would like to have the privilege of licking him," came from lazy, luxury-loving Dick Braintree.

"I don't believe in corporal punishment," from big, tender-hearted Colonel Eversoll.

"My mother believed in copious doses of hickory oil, well spanked in. And I think she was right. It's a great lubricator, and keeps children straight," said Dr. Malridge.

Such were the fragments of conversation that drifted to Mary.

Mrs. Preston and the guests in the house wondered at Mary's bringing Carl into the dining-room; but Mary took no notice of them, nor of the remarks that she heard. She did not talk the matter over with Mrs. Preston, nor with the rest of the inmates of the house, setting them a good example, and exhorting them to go and do likewise, as so many enlightened, good people do. No; she hid her light under a bushel. No one but Charles knew that she

had met Mr. Burton, and even he did not know of the dramatic episode that had taken place in the parlor. Her way of doing things was really quite out of the ordinary, and against all precedent, and we can't believe but that she was a little selfish. Mr. Burton did not tell it either. A few such people in a community, and there would be a dearth of news.

As they left the dining-room, Mrs. Preston overheard Mary say to her husband:

"This atmosphere is enough to stifle Carl. Let us take him for a walk."

This remark nettled Mrs. Preston. It was the most exquisitely appointed and deliciously cooled dining-room at the Springs. The windows were filled with ferns and fragrant blossoms, and flowers bloomed in the center of every table. To hear this leader of society, this beautiful Mrs. Thornton, this queen among women, the one whom she had been so anxious to receive in her house, make such a remark, was too much. She burst into tears and had to be consoled and comforted.

Mary was not conscious that her words had been overheard; and she went with Charles and the children for a walk, and wandered around the grounds of the new home. When they returned and Mary had donned a loose négligé, she told stories to the children.

To a question from Gertrude to Carl about his mother, he replied:

"Yes, she is sick. Most always when I go into her room, she says, 'Take that child away.' She says I'm a nuisance. Did you ever think Gertrude a nuisance?" —this last to Mary.

At that moment, Gertrude, holding to the back of her mother's chair, was standing on the rocker, swinging to and fro, as Mary gently rocked. Mary laughingly said:

"Of course! Isn't she a nuisance now?—standing on my rockers!" And she caught Gertrude, pulling her to her, giving her a playful whipping, much to the amusement of the children. It ended in a regular romp and pillow-fight, this queenly woman entering into it with the zest and spirit of a child. It was great fun for Carl. He seemed also filled with astonishment, as he watched Mary; and afterward, he said to Gertrude:

"I never knew ladies played like your mamma. Isn't it fun?"

And so ended the first day at Willow Springs.

CHAPTER XV.

A DEMONSTRATION OF TRUTH.

THE next morning there was a sternness in the sky, a plaintive melancholy in the sighing of the wind as it swept through the trees. It had rained through a good part of the night, and the morning was wet and forbidding, and made indoors desirable. Morning walks had to be postponed except to the web-footed. No matter. It was an hour for meditation for both Charles and Mary. It was Sunday. To-morrow they would be in their new home.

Among the inmates of this exclusive, little hotel, seated together at a table in the cozy dining-room on this particular morning, were three especially attractive young ladies—Miss Isabel Stevens, of Boston, daughter of the Honorable George Stevens, who had been in Congress many years. Her mother was a Miss Adams, a direct descendant of President John Adams.

George Stevens was a man of ample means, but not of great wealth. Isabel had had all the advantages of social life in the principal cities in America and abroad. She had been out about four years, and was still, so report said, whole hearted and fancy free. She was an unusual girl—a very strong character. She had a decided mind

of her own, and she was quite capable of doing her own thinking. She was widely read on all topics of the day, both social and religious. She also had dipped into science, and was much interested in various new phases of psychic phenomena. She had rich chestnut brown hair, large, fearless, brown eyes, ruddy cheeks and lips, a rather robust figure, and she walked with that full, easy swing that only comes from perfect physical health. Her face was as free from care as a summer sky from the clouds.

Miss Edith Brandt was the daughter of Col. Elihu Brandt, the great railroad magnate of New York. She had entered society three years previous. She was superbly beautiful and distinguished looking. Her hair was purple black, her violet eyes were such as one reads about, but seldom sees. They were large and full with jet-black lashes that curled upward. Her eyebrows were beautifully arched and black as her hair. Her skin was like alabaster, and her tall, slender figure was perfect in contour. She had had rare opportunities socially. Her handsome and accomplished mother was an acknowledged social leader.

Edith had been engaged to an English duke, and preparations were being made for the wedding, when, suddenly she changed her mind, refused to marry him, and returned to America, much to the chagrin of the prospective bridegroom.

Edith was dignified and was considered haughty by strangers who did not know her. She had a decided will of her own, but could easily be led by those she loved, and by those who understood her. She really had an ardent, lovable nature.

She had one sister, who now sat at the table by her side; and a greater contrast could hardly be imagined. Pansy Brandt was just like her name. She was petite

in figure, a perfect doll of a girl, round and rosy and dimpled. She had large, liquid, brown eyes and a shower of golden hair which was as fine and soft as silken floss.

A year previous, Mrs. Brandt and Pansy were driving in Central Park, when the horses took fright and ran away. They were both thrown from the carriage. Mrs. Brandt was only slightly bruised; but Pansy was picked up apparently lifeless. It was long before consciousness was restored, and weary weeks of suffering and suspense followed. Then, she gradually began to improve, and finally was apparently well, but she could not walk. Her limbs were almost useless. She could move a very little on two crutches; but usually she had to be carried or moved in an invalid's chair.

This was a terrible blow to the Brandts, especially to Edith, who idolized her sister. Edith and her mother were now at Willow Springs with Pansy who was under the care of Dr. Cline. Isabel Stevens came to the Springs to be with the Brandts. They were all good friends of Mary, and she was a great favorite with them.

Mary and Charles had breakfasted in their own room with the children, this Sunday morning. Afterward, when Mary was reading to Charles, he suddenly signalled her to stop and listen. Carl's voice came to them from the adjoining room, saying in a guarded tone to Gertrude:

"I'll tell you something if you won't tell."

"All right. I won't," replied Gertrude.

"Cross your heart," said Carl.

"Yes, I cross my heart,"—supposedly making the necessary motions, as there was a pause. "Now tell me."

"Do you know, I would like to kill God. I hate Him worse than the devil."

"Oh, Carl! Why?" in a little awed voice.

"Because He made my mamma sick, and He could make

her well and He doesn't. If she were well I could play with her like you do with your mamma, and have pillow-fights and things. Oh! you ought to see my mamma. She's awful pretty—little black curly rings in her hair, oh, awful cute! And she can laugh like anything when she's tickled."

For the moment, while describing his mother, Carl's voice became quite animated. Then, with almost ferocious bitterness, he reiterated:

"I don't love God, and I'd like to kill Him. There!"

There was silence for a moment, Mary and Charles both listening and wondering what Gertrude would say.

"Would you want to kill all the beautiful things in the world, and me and my mamma and papa and your mamma and papa?" asked Gertrude.

"Of course not. What are you talking about?"

"Only that if you killed God, you would kill everything in the world, and there would be no gladness, nor love, nor joy."

"I'd like to know why?"

"Because the Lord God is in everything. God is in our joy, our gladness. Mamma says gladness makes you want to be glad, and keeps you well and happy. Now, if you are very glad and happy, maybe your mamma will get well by-and-by."

"I don't believe it," maintained Carl stoutly. "She has always been sick ever since I was a little baby; and once, when we thought she was going to die, my Sunday-school teacher said that she would be an angel. I told him I didn't want her to be an angel, and he said I was a bad boy. Would *you* want to be an angel? *I* wouldn't."

"Why?" asked Gertrude.

"Just because I wouldn't. And you wouldn't either—now would you?"

"I don't know. I never saw an angel."

"Well, you've seen pictures of them. They have pin-feathers all over them and wings growing out of their backs, wings most as big as they are themselves; and they have no clothes on them, just a lot of white rags and strings tied to them. And they are always flying about, and I guess, when they sleep they lay on their stomachs 'cause they couldn't lay on their backs, for they'd muss up their wings, you know. I don't think they are a bit pretty, and I wouldn't want my mamma to be a thing like that;" and again the voice took the little, hungry plaint.

Mary and Charles had been shaking with laughter; but when Carl referred again to his mother in that hungry voice, Mary went into the room, and taking the child in her arms, cuddled and kissed and caressed him, and allowed him almost to strangle her with his vehement squeezes. He had the most impulsive little heart, and even in this short time Mary had won him completely. All the hunger and loneliness were revealed. Is there anything on earth to equal the intense longing in a child's heart for love? The child has no philosophy to aid him in stifling that hunger, and, God help us! the world is full of it, full of heartaches. We give food, clothing, beautiful homes, and education to our children, and then stand amazed when they grow up and go astray. Parents withhold the very thing that would have kept their children loyal and true. Feed children with love; fill their lives with affection; and gather them to your heart as a hen gathers her brood beneath her wings, and doubt not the recompense will be great.

* * * * * * * *

After dinner, Mary came out on the piazza to find Mrs. Tremaine, Gertrude, Edith, and Miss Stevens all grouped

around little Ruth. They were laughing at some of Gertrude's quaint remarks.

Mrs. Tremaine, seeing Mary, hastened forward to meet her. There was an unusually happy light in her eyes as she said:

"I am sure, Mrs. Thornton, I don't know how to account for it; but Ruth has not had such a night's rest since her accident; and to-day, she is comparatively without pain. She almost lifted her head from the pillow. She really seemed to enjoy her breakfast. And once this morning, she turned her head way around. I was quite frightened. I think you must have bewitched her. Do look at her. Don't you think she has a trifle more color, and that her eyes look a little brighter?" said the anxious mother.

Miss Stevens darted a sharp look at Mary. She had not been raised in thoughtful, studious Boston for nothing.

"I am sure we can all see a marked change for the better in Ruth. I hope the fairies will keep on with their good work," said she significantly; for, from a word or two dropped by Gertrude, Miss Stevens had a suspicion that there was a strong current of health flowing from some direction.

Mary said: "I am sure she looks better, and I feel sure she *is* better." Then, after a few words spoken to Ruth, she turned and said to the others: "I am going to join the gentlemen in the drawing-room. I see it is clouding up again, and I think it is too damp out here for any of you. Will you not come with me?"

She led the way into the house, followed by the entire party. When they entered the drawing-room, they found there, General Starkweather, Charles, Harry, Richard Braintree, Bennie Gordon, Donald Barry, and Sidney

Banks. Some of them were talking, while others lounged about, listening. At sight of the ladies, the gentlemen arose, and began adjusting chairs and divans for them, as Mary asked in a gay voice:

"Are we intruding? Are ladies forbidden in this wise council? What are you discussing, anything that concerns us?"

"My goodness! listen to that," exclaimed Charles. "My dear, how many questions can you ask without stopping to take breath? But to answer them: First, you are not intruding. Second, ladies are not forbidden in this wise council. Third, we are fast drifting into speculating on the mysteries and possibilities of the human soul. Fourth, does it concern you? Well, as we are not Chinamen, and think you possibly have souls, we think it does. Have I answered you satisfactorily?"

"Perfectly, my liege," said Mary, making him a profound curtsey. Then, glancing around, she exclaimed, as she saw the little party settling down all about the room: "Oh! this will never do. You are all too scattered—too remote entirely!" And she led the way to the extreme end of the room. "Now, here, we can be wonderfully cosy and exclusive, and not interfere with any other guests that happen to come in."

There was a general move in her direction. They all remained, except Sidney Banks, who declared he had no taste for religious discussions. No one was surprised, as he was known to be a rank atheist.

They were soon settled to their satisfaction. when Mary again exclaimed:

"But where are Dr. Malridge and Colonel Eversoll?"

"We are expecting them to materialize at any moment. So possess your soul in patience," said the general.

"I can't conceive of a more delightful treat," declared

Miss Stevens, with animation, "than to see those two men pitted against each other. I am told they never can come together without a little brush."

"I don't think they can," replied Harry. "Last night they had a regular tussle. It was hard to tell who got the best of it, at first. However, the colonel had his innings when it came to the war. He told how the Christians studied the best methods of killing people; how the ministers stood in the pulpits and said, 'Thou shalt not kill,' and in the same breath, lauded the bravery of the army and prayed for victory in battle, which meant slaughter; and rejoiced at the promotion, and prayed for the long life and prosperity of those that were instrumental in killing most of the enemy. Then the colonel dwelt upon the fact of how a man who kills his personal enemy that has done him an injury, is hung; but how another man, going into battle, may become a hero and get promoted, by killing a hundred men that have done him no personal wrong whatever. He declared that consistency is a jewel that does not belong to the orthodox religion, and that the civilized Christian armies were not content with bringing their fellow-men into battle, but even trained dumb brutes—horses, dogs, and even innocent doves,—for the same purpose: to carry messages, water, bandages, and remedies to and from the battle-field. The people sat round and cheered the colonel. I think he got the best of it; for it's hard to reconcile the Commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill,' with thanking God for the preservation of a murderer, all in one church service. They really ought to drop out one or the other."

"My! it does seem true, and it is awful, isn't it?" said Edith. "I don't think I ever thought of war just in that way. I thank you, Mr. Burbank, for telling us this. It's given me something new to think about. I always thought

it was rather brave in a man to go to war. Now, I already begin to have my doubts about it."

"My father thinks Colonel Eversoll has been the great shackle-bearer of the age," said Miss Stevens.

"So he has," assented the general; "but the mischief of it is that sometimes he has lost his head in his awful attacks upon shams, and in his natural repugnance to hypocrisy, he has gone too far. But after all," said the general, considerately, "what one of us has not been carried too far through our enthusiasm?"

"Very few indeed," said Harry. "The colonel has made life worth living to many men, and he has set them an example of being good for good's own sake."

"We may not agree with him in everything; but neither do we agree with Dr. Malridge," said Charles.

"They are both brilliant and good men," said the general. "Dr. Malridge is one of those remarkable men that have appeared from time to time, to electrify the religious world by eloquence the most persuasive; and by living lives that serve as samples to guide others on their course to Heaven. His thunder-tones have been heard throughout the land."

"No one could doubt the sincerity of either of them," said Charles.

"An impartial judge would never doubt that," replied the general. "No man ever lived whose sensibility was more susceptible than Colonel Eversoll's. Not only are his eyes open to Nature, but every fibre of his being seems tremblingly alive to her presence. His nerves are like an Eolian harp that the faintest breath of wind can make vibrate musically. The shapes and hues of natural objects in all their infinite diversity, seem to be the constant companions of his thoughts. Hardly a leaf or flower exists with which he is not familiar, from the grass by the

wayside to the huge oak on the hillside; from the violet to the dome of heaven; from the skylark to the stars that 'weave their everlasting web of motion through the sky.' All things in Nature claim his loving friendship."

"In the time to come, as well as now, he will be remembered with gratitude and thanksgiving," said Harry with much feeling.

At this moment Dr. Malridge entered the room. "Ah!" he exclaimed in his own inimitable manner, as he hurried forward, "this *is* a pleasure indeed. It has been such a dreary day; but the sight of the ladies, has banished all the clouds. Are we going to have your opinions on ethics, or what? You look very wise and exclusive way off here in the corner of this big room."

"Oh, we are going to let the men talk to-day," laughed Mary. "We women are going to follow St. Paul's injunction, for once, and keep silence."

"Dear doctor, what do you think made St. Paul so grumpy in regard to the women?" asked Miss Stevens.

"I'm sure I have never been able to discover the cause. But my opinion is that his eyes were so weak he was never able to see how beautiful they were," responded the doctor gallantly.

"I think he was jilted," said Harry, "and took his revenge on the sex."

"More likely, he never could find any one to have him and became vinegary," remarked Edith.

Meantime, the religious controversy was waxing hot among the gentlemen. Dick and Donald had been saying that while they enjoyed it, they felt like running away, as it was mostly Greek to them. Dick declared he believed he was better acquainted with "Hoyle on Games" than with the Bible. Harry threatened he would shoot him if he left. So, Dick collapsed into the protecting

arms of a large chair, and the conversation drifted on between the four gentlemen. Carl and Gertrude were near Ruth's chair. The doctor was jesting with the ladies.

Suddenly, Charles brought his fist down emphatically on the arm of his chair, and exclaimed in reply to some remark:

"What does it matter whether we are followers of Mahomet, Zoroaster, Confucius, Buddah, or Christ? If we strive to do the best we know how, it is all that is required of us. They were all great teachers, and it does not matter."

"It matters a great deal," chimed in Dr. Malridge. "There is but one revealed religion, and that is the revealed religion of Jesus Christ. If you don't look out, you will become as bad as our friend, the audacious, atheistic iconoclast, Colonel Eversoll."

"You cannot honestly call him an atheist," said Harry pleasantly. "I think I shall have to defend the colonel in his absence."

"No," remarked the general, "that is not fair. You cannot call him an atheist. You must remember his youthful experience; he had begun to doubt in youth."

"Yes," replied Dr. Malridge, "and like Peter, as soon as he began to doubt, he sank."

"True," replied the general, "but like Peter, he only sank a little way. His doubt was great, but it did not quite submerge him. He did not reach the bottom. At first, he was almost what he was called, an atheist, not quite. For under all that some people called blasphemous, was that inward principle of good. His mind is constantly unfolding to Nature's God, and his beliefs have ripened and merged into agnosticism."

"Speaking of his early experience," said Harry, "I have heard him state, that after scrambling mentally over the

rocks and shoals of the eternal tempest of religious controversy and Orthodoxy, forcing his way through all preceding examples and teachings, and standing upon a platform of Common Sense and Truth and Love, with the light of reason breaking in upon him, how the feelings of emancipation overcame him, and he could feel the manacles of intellectual slavery falling away from him; and now he said he looked at Tom Paine and Voltaire much as the blacks must have looked at Lincoln."

"Yes," said Charles, "and I, too, at that time, have heard him say how he felt the torrent of mighty love pouring into his soul from eternal Nature."

"He is a theologian, in spite of himself," smilingly said the general. "He believes in the power that makes for righteousness, in that he loves all that God has made. Forget his words and remember his inspiration for all that is good in man and nature."

"It seems to me," said Charles, "that if God lives and moves and has His being in the whole of His works, then to love His works is to love God; and when a man stands on the mountain-top, and views God's works and acknowledges their beauty and inspiration, he acknowledges God."

"Yet the real, divine inspiration is not there; the real, true religious essence," said the doctor. "So, as a matter of fact, he does not acknowledge God and become newborn, but stands in this mighty presence, and utters the awful blasphemy, 'I don't know.' "

"But," argued Harry, "when a man says, 'I don't know,' it is not negative any more than affirmative. And in regard to the beyond, it seems to me, it is more to be commended than when the man says, 'I know.' I cannot understand the mind that seeks God in one direction, and as an individual something apart from all else."

But at this moment the current of the conversation was

again disturbed by the arrival of the colonel, who, as Billy settled him, in a comfortable manner, laughingly remarked in answer to several inquiries as to how he was:

"My dear Mrs. Thornton, I think either you or your baby girl must be a witch. You made the remark, last evening, when you said Good-night, that you were sure I would sleep better; and I don't think I have slept so well for a year as I did last night. Lately, I have almost dreaded to go to bed, I suffer so at night. Have you a magic to exorcise pain?" he smilingly questioned. "Do you know, this morning, I almost imagined the swelling was a little less. Of course it was imagination; but it shows what an immense bump of hope I have. At the first little relief from pain, I began to imagine I was better; and, do you know, I have kept thinking it all day until I feel like a fighting rooster;" and glancing at Dr. Malridge, he said menacingly: "Look out for my spurs!"

Again Miss Stevens glanced sharply at Mary. But her face betrayed nothing. The colonel, without waiting for any reply to his remarks, continued:

"At the moment I entered, I just caught enough of the tail end of your conversation to know you were having religious service; and I fear my coming in has disturbed you. It's like Satan entering into Paradise. I feel I ought to apologize. But pray go on. I'll try and say Amen at the right places. So don't mind me."

The colonel's sally brought a laugh from all present. Then the conversation was resumed.

"Oh," said the general, good-naturedly, "we will not mind you in the least. In fact, we'll take you in as one of us, and let you have your say. Go on, Harry. You had the floor when the colonel entered."

Gertrude had gone to her father and was sitting on his

knee. Charles had his arm around Carl, who was standing by his side, as Harry replied:

"Oh, I don't know that I have much more to say—only this: that I cannot think of God in one direction only. It seems to me He must pervade everything. I would have to *feel* God's works."

"That is just it," said Charles. "I like to think of God as pervading everything, and that when we breathe the sweet air, or hold the dewy rose or lily, we breathe and hold Him. Then we feel He is eternal."

"A man may love the beautiful," said Dr. Malridge, "listen to the harmonious strains of song with rapture, and love mankind; yet that does not prove his divine title. I might feel all these, and yet I still would have an unsatisfied longing, which all these would be impotent to fill, and which true religion, alone, can give. There would still be that thirst unquenchable, that the waters from the springs beautiful, could not allay. The burning thirst belongs to the immoral essence of man's nature, and only true religion could quench that thirst and give perennial life."

"The man that feels that, does not appreciate the world beautiful," said the colonel.

"Yes, he may," replied Dr. Malridge; "but there is another longing—the wild effort and hunger for the beauty above."

"For what he can't see and what he knows nothing about," said the colonel. "It's like some tourists wandering from one scene to another, never enjoying the present magnificence, but wondering what they are going to see next. Now, if there is a God, who made the world beautiful, He must have meant us to enjoy it; and for us to wait until the next is revealed to enjoy *that*. It is the desire of the butterfly for the star."

"It is the forethought of the loveliness to come," sighed Dr. Malridge.

"And for that reason, he should sigh and shed tears," laughed the colonel.

"It's a passion to be satiated by no sublunary sights, or sounds, or sentiments, and the soul athirst strives to allay its fever in its endeavors to unravel these mysteries," replied Dr. Malridge.

"Which are futile efforts," asserted Colonel Eversoll. "The idea of a man's being inspired by a persistent ecstasy to look beyond the grave where all is hidden, to struggle by multiform combinations of energy, time, and strength, and to anticipate the God he pretends to serve and adore by unraveling the very element that belongs solely to eternity. He goes at this amidst groans and tears, and with unflinching efforts, beating on the walls of the Eternal, which, in spite of his tumultous efforts, ever keeps silent."

"I don't believe I exactly agree with either of you," said Charles. "Little by little, the light is breaking; hands invisible are touching the springs; day by day we see more clearly."

"Undoubtedly there has been and there is now a great religious convulsion," said the general. "And religion is being transposed to a rational point much nearer true divinity than in the past. There is more love and there is less fear, more hope and less despair." His voice was as smooth as oil poured on troubled waters.

"I declare!" said Dr. Malridge, "you all seem to have become doubters. You are losing all reverence. God must be feared as well as loved."

"I assure you, my dear Doctor," said Charles, "I never was more sincere in my life. It is because I *do* love God with all my heart and soul that I do not believe those

things. I don't want to go to Heaven through fear, but through love and desire and joyous longing for His presence; and for the hope of being in the midst of eternal good. When I love Nature and my surroundings and my fellow-men, my heart swells, and God stands forth in sublimity, and the petty cares of life become as nothing."

Mary glanced at him; her face was glowing. She thanked him with her eyes. He had spoken earnestly. Both the children were listening. Little Gertrude exclaimed:

"Papa, I think that was a beautiful thought. I see God plainer every day. Wasn't that beautiful, Carl? Don't you see Him?"

"Well, I think I do," rather slowly and doubtfully replied Carl.

These remarks on the part of the children caused an "audible smile." The conversation was about to be resumed, when Dr. Cline's voice came to them, talking to some one on the piazza. They were standing just outside the window, and the voices were plainly audible. It was not the doctor's office hours, and they evidently had just met, and were on more intimate terms than Dr. Cline and the casual patient would be. Charles held up his hand to enjoin silence, and they all listened intently. Dr. Cline was saying:

"I confess, Mr. Willis, I am puzzled over your wife's case. I cannot discover the seat of her disease. Are you *sure* she has nothing on her mind that would cause this trouble?"

"Nothing that I know of," replied Mr. Willis; "but even if it *were* her mind, it could not cause her to suffer as she does, at times almost approaching dissolution."

"Yes, it could; and the alleviation and removal of disease is, in a great number of cases, dependent on the con-

dition of the mind. An agreement between the mind and body is constant. Stern once said: 'The body and the mind are like a jerkin and a jerkin's lining; rumple one and you rumple the other.' "

"I can't understand my wife. She seems wholly indifferent whether she gets well or not."

"That is bad; death is like everything else—a foe to be fought; a wild beast to be kept at bay. They who contend with the most spirit, live the greater number of days. The will to live and the determination not to die make the most efficacious antidote against the poison of the Letheal dart."

"Do you think one can will himself to life and health?"

"In a large measure, yes. Now, just as an instance, take our friend, Colonel Eversoll. Some men, suffering as he is with an incurable disease, would be miserable and make every one around them miserable, and fret and fume; and some fine morning would roll over and die. But it's different with him. He has a heart for any fate, and will not own himself conquered. Some people live in such fear of illness that their minds contract the very disease that eventually consumes them. It would be an interesting bit of statistics, could it be drawn up, that would show how many poor creatures have died from disease and how many from fright. Ah!" exclaimed Dr. Cline, "we doctors see strange things, and some of my best remedies for *positive* illness have been my reputation and bread pills. Bring your wife to me to-morrow, and, in the meantime, try to discover if there is anything worrying or fretting her."

The two gentlemen separated.

"What a plea Dr. Cline has made for metaphysics!" exclaimed Mary, drawing a long breath, and with a triumphant look on her face. "If mind is the cause of disease,

more mind ought to cure disease—not the mind that kills, but the mind that is eternal and unchangeable, which is life, and in which there is no death."

"Yes, I believe myself that Mr. Panic kills as many people, one way or another, as Mr. Disease," laughed the colonel. "I presume these people—these lunatics—that are to open the new sanatorium to-morrow, would have made a good deal of capital out of Dr. Cline's remarks. As you say, Mrs. Thornton, it would have been trump cards for them."

"It would indeed," assented Mary, with a merry gleam in her eye.

"America, at present, seems to have an *ist* craze," said Dr. Malridge, rising and pacing softly and slowly back and forth, his hands clasped behind him. When he spoke, he stopped, waved his hands to emphasize his remark, then resumed his walk. "One would think she had gone mad. She is equal to a steam incubator for hatching out new cults."

"That's the penalty of living not only in an advanced age, but in an advanced country," replied Harry. "We are a rapid people. I have read a good deal, lately, about these cults, even in our daily papers. Only this morning I read an interesting editorial in *Puck,* which said that facts were cold, hard things, and no fact was colder nor harder than that a better understanding of the laws of life is being forced upon the world by the various mental schools; and wound up by saying we were in the last days of drug-worship."

"*Puck* is no authority," said Dr. Malridge, shrugging his shoulders.

"Not unless the article had been purely orthodox," good-humoredly said Colonel Eversoll.

Dr. Malridge stopped and looked at the colonel, saying:

"Just consider I owe you one. Wait until I get you alone." Then he continued: "I have heard more idiotic nonsense about these people. Now, the place that is to be opened to-morrow, is one of the finest here. It has a large handsome house. It has been entirely done over, and a new addition built in the form of a temple. The exterior is certainly beautiful, and I suppose the inside will correspond with the outside. There evidently has been a good deal of money spent. The grounds are large and commodious, and being so accessible to the springs has made the estate valuable. That the promoters of this enterprise should be allowed to gull people out of their money to purchase such an expensive place, is a shame and a disgrace."

"But," said the colonel, sarcastically, "what a different thing it would be if it had been a church hospital with an orthodox badge tacked on it. For my part, I think it about six of one and a half dozen of the other. This mental religion is about on a par with your shouting religion, only there is a little more 'harmonious vibration' in it than in the other," concluded the colonel, ironically.

Dr. Malridge paid no attention to the colonel's remarks except his last one. "That's it, a lot of vague expressions that to most people mean nothing. Now, suppose one of them should break a leg. What would he do?"

"Oh, they wouldn't mind a little thing like that! They'd just calmly fold their hands and gaze heavenward, and *think* the bones together again, and—presto!—the leg would be well. That's a fact; that's the way they'd do it," laughed the colonel.

None laughed more heartily at the colonel's description than Mary and Charles.

Miss Stevens had been listening to all this with much curiosity. She had expected Mrs. Thornton to defend the

mental idea. Except for an occasional gleam in Mary's eye, as she looked at her father or Charles, she made no sign, and Miss Stevens wondered if Charles could be in sympathy with his wife. With this thought in mind she turned to Charles and asked:

"Is that the way you would cure your leg if it were broken?"

His reply nonplussed her: "By no means. I would send for the best surgeon to be found."

"Sensible man!" exclaimed the colonel. "I was beginning to get alarmed about you. It's all the worst bosh I ever heard of."

"Did you ever investigate this theory?" asked Miss Stevens.

"Not I," replied the colonel.

"Should we better not suspend our judgment, for the present, and await developments? 'By their works ye shall know them.' These people at the new sanatorium may do some good. When a person is relieved from suffering, he knows it. If medical treatment has failed, and his suffering ends while undergoing metaphysical treatment, he is very apt to think the latter cured him," said Miss Stevens.

"I would doubt it, even then," said the colonel.

Edith had been sitting, with wide-open eyes, drinking in every syllable. Never in her life had she heard such a conversation. She was an intelligent girl and cultivated in a general way, and she had but vaguely comprehended much that had been said; but she was of a fine, susceptible nature, and she felt the strong under-current of the discussion. She admired Mary above all women. She had watched her color deepen and noted the gleam in her eyes as she leaned her cheek on her hand and listened intently. She saw that Mary was deeply interested. She

also had watched Isabel, and was surprised at her assertions and questions. She leaned forward to catch the colonel's words. She evidently was expecting a different reply, and she asked the question:

"But if it were some one you knew—an actual experience of a known friend?"

The colonel looked in surprise at the eager, questioning face. She was sitting near him, and reaching over, he took her hand in that fatherly, winning way he always had with the young, and asked:

"My dear girl, do you believe all this nonsense?"

"I don't know anything about it," said Edith. "I never heard of it until this afternoon. I have read in the Bible, though, how Christ and His apostles cured the afflicted and I have wondered if that was true then, why it could not be done now. Surely, if a friend of mine were sick—some one I had confidence in—and if he were healed, I would believe it then, wouldn't you?"

"No; I would not," said the colonel positively, "because it's out of all reason. I would think it an illusion. I would not believe."

"Yet you, a lawyer, would hang a man on the evidence of these same friends!" exclaimed Charles. "There would be no illusion about that. 'Consistency, thou art a jewel!' These same friends' verdict would take a man's life, but would not be sufficient to give to all men life everlasting."

The colonel glanced at Charles inquiringly, as he said ironically: "Do hear him. Charles, you have missed your vocation. You should have been a preacher. To hear you, one would think you were a sort of second Christ."

"Would that I were! But wait until you are cured," replied Charles, good-naturedly.

This amused the colonel very much; and he laughed heartily as he replied:

"Yes, when I am cured *that* way I will believe. I will worship this God myself." Then, turning to Mrs. Tremaine, who, like Edith, had been a silent but interested listener, he added: "You will have to take your little daughter to these people over at the new sanatorium."

"When I heard about them, I asked Dr. Malridge about it, and he said it is not scientific nor Christian," replied Mrs. Tremaine.

"Did not Christ heal?" asked Edith.

"Yes," chimed in Miss Stevens; "did He not say, 'He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also'? 'Heal the sick,' was His command. Therefore, no matter what else people may say about this method. I can't see how they can call it un-Christian."

"My dear girls," said Dr. Malridge, "that was long ago. That day is past."

"My dear young ladies, that was long ago. We have grown so good, now, in this day and generation, that God does not trouble Himself about us. He knows we have such wise, broad-minded leaders to look after us," put in the colonel, with a significant look at Dr. Malridge.

Dr. Malridge ignored the colonel's thrust; and remarked: "The day of miracles has past. Christ did many things we cannot do. He did them to prove that He was God. I am sorry to see so much skepticism among you young people; but in spite of it and of the colonel's tearing-down faculties and agnosticism, the Church still stands, even as it stood in our fathers' time, and as it will ever stand."

"My dear Doctor, with all due respect and reverence, I must differ with you," exclaimed Charles with great animation. "The Church does not stand as in your father's time. Thank the Lord theology is not stationary! The

hell and superstition on which it stood, have been swept away and you have been swept with it. You are not a back number."

"That is partly true," replied the doctor; "but think of the Church and what it represents. Compared to this, what a pitiful thing you seem. Yet you, with your rash young blood, would try to pluck from the great Unknowable mysteries that must ever remain hidden. Can you, with your reason, grapple with these mysteries of creation, unravel the skein wound in eternity?"

"Yes," earnestly replied Charles. "Science demonstrates there is the unknown, but not the unknowable. Little by little, Nature yields her secrets. Every day demonstrates this. An eclipse was once considered the sign of an angry God. The very lightning that ran loose in the heavens, and before which your fathers stood in awe, as belonging to the unknowable, became known when a Franklin, an Edison, a Tesla came and with brain and hand that feared not, tore this mighty monster from the sky, and compelled it to yield its secret."

"Hear, hear! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" came in a chorus from the listeners. Charles, in his excitement, had risen from his chair and was standing in front of Dr. Malridge; and for a moment, they seemed to have forgotten there was any one present. The scene had become quite dramatic.

At that moment, a servant entered with a card for the doctor, who, excusing himself, left the room. This broke up the discussion.

Dick Braintree had not uttered a word; but he had been an interested listener. He, with Harry and the general and the young ladies, adjourned to the piazza to inspect the weather. Mrs. Tremaine was standing at the window talking to the general, who was on the outside. Mary had

not moved. Her cheek was again resting on her hand. She seemed to be lost in thought. Charles was leaning over the colonel's chair, talking.

Suddenly, the sound of a hand-organ was heard in the distance, playing a gay air. Gertrude ran to the window, and then ran back to Ruth, exclaiming excitedly:

"Oh, it's a hand-organ man! Maybe they have a monkey. Don't you want to see it?"

But instead of replying, Ruth turned her head as if looking for some one, and Gertrude said:

"What do you want? What are you looking for?"

"I—I thought I heard some one say, 'Lift up your head,' and I was looking to see who it was."

"Well, lift it up," said Gertrude. "I will help you."

She slipped her hand under Ruth's head and gently raised it, not without many little *"oh! oh! ohs!"* from Ruth and spasmodic twinges. When her head was lifted up so that she was in a sitting position, she seemed very much surprised and pleased. Gertrude was passing her hands over her.

The music seemed to be coming nearer, and Gertrude said:

"Now put your feet down, and I will help you to the window."

It took some little time to get first one foot down, then the other. Then came Gertrude's coaxing voice: "Lean on me and I will help you to the window."

Mary had been watching the children. She now came forward and held out her arms, saying encouragingly: "Come to me, dear."

Ruth, leaning on Gertrude, walked to Mary. In her delight at walking, Ruth forgot all about the music; but looking toward her mother, called out:

"See, see, mamma! I can walk."

Mrs. Tremaine turned and saw Ruth on her feet by Mary. Her mind only took in the awful consequence of any one's moving the child; and in the fright of it, she made one step forward, exclaiming:

"Ruth, my child!" and fell unconscious to the floor.

Colonel Eversoll was so shocked at seeing Mrs. Tremaine fall, that he sprang up and hastened to her. Harry, Dick, and the young ladies rushed in, and there was much commotion. It was some moments before Mrs. Tremaine was restored to consciousness. She at once murmured, "Ruth."

Mary held Ruth toward her mother, who clasped her child in her arms, the tears streaming down her cheeks. Colonel Eversoll was much affected and turned away. Gertrude came up to him and looking up in his face, said archly:

"How is your foot, Colonel?"

For an instant, one could have knocked down the colonel with a feather. He had been so shocked at seeing Ruth on her feet and Mrs. Tremaine fall like a dead woman, that he had never thought of his foot. He looked down at it, then at Gertrude, and exclaimed:

"Good God!"

"Yes, He is a good God, for He has cured your foot."

The colonel understood, of course, that it was the shock and fright that had put him on his feet. But his words came back to him: "I will worship the God that cures me."

It was some minutes before any one took in the situation beyond the fact that Mrs. Tremaine had fainted. When they began to realize that both the colonel and Ruth were on their feet, the commotion became great. Guests began to gather in the drawing-room. "What is it?"

"What is the matter?" "What has happened?" was on every lip.

But there was no one able to offer any intelligent solution. Mary and Charles, taking advantage of the confusion, had escaped to their room.

CHAPTER XVI.

MRS. TREMAINE SPURNS SIDNEY BANKS.

THE next morning there were so many things happening at the same time in different parts of Willow Springs, that we will have to apologize to our reader for taking him from place to place in such an unconventional manner. But, as each event has much to do with the warp and woof of our story, we can ill avoid it.

* * * * * * * *

Physically, Sidney Banks had changed but little in these years; and morally not at all. He was still unmarried. Eight years previous, when he had seen the bubble of his vengeance burst, he was, for once, shocked into inactivity. But it was only temporary. He drew no lesson from it. Too long had he allowed his passions to drive him whither they would. Too long had he given himself loose rein. And it was only for a time that he ceased from his underhanded work. He was far more jealous of Charles than he ever had been of Hugh. He brooded over it until he actually convinced himself that Charles had usurped his place and rights. He had an everlasting discontent; and a desire to ruin them one and all. No opportunity had offered itself until Charles entered the political field. Here

was his chance, and he determined to defeat him if possible. Sidney was a shrewd, scheming, political trickster. And he was backed and endorsed by men who measure a man's greatness and patriotism by the amount of chicanery and deception and strategy he is capable of. Honesty would have disqualified him in their estimation.

Sidney was here at Willow Springs, smiling and agreeable, meeting Mary, Charles, and the general in the most friendly way; while secretly he was throwing out his lines in every direction for the purpose of defeating Charles. As usual, he was using others to do his work. He was not the man to come out into the open and fight. He was the kind of man that would stab an enemy in the back.

He never had quite recovered from the surprise and consternation of losing Mrs. Multon. He had set his spies to watch Mabelthorp, and it was long ere he learned she was not there. It had been always a mystery to him how she had escaped unobserved. He never had seen her from the day she sat under the old apple-tree until he entered the train weeks before, and recognized her in the elegantly dressed woman, bound for Willow Springs, with her little, invalid daughter. She was traveling with two servants—a maid and a trained nurse for her child. Sidney's destination was not Willow Springs; but he could not let this opportunity slip by of renewing, if possible, his acquaintance with Mrs. Multon. It was not difficult for this clever, handsome fellow to insinuate himself into the good graces of the pretty and susceptible French maid; and to draw from her the information he desired in regard to her mistress. He learned she was still a widow; that her name was Tremaine; that she had lived much abroad. Beyond that the maid knew nothing.

Sidney laughed to himself and thought: "I wonder how

many more names she has. 'Tremaine.' Really, it is rather an improvement on the name of 'Multon.' 'Berenice Tremaine'—quite aristocratic."

He was really very much struck by her great beauty and style. There was nothing of the parvenu about her. She had the manner of one born to the purple. Sidney was enough of a connoisseur to see that.

"My! One would never think, to look at that woman, that she had ever known what it was to want for bread—had actually been an object of charity."

It was wonderful to him. He could hardly believe his eyes. Yet, it only whetted his interest.

"She is a clever manager, anyway, and evidently puts a high price on herself. I would like to know who is putting up the money for all this."

Such were his vulgar thoughts. It never entered his head that she might have come honestly by her prosperity. He at once concluded to change his destination and go to Willow Springs. He also determined, when he met Mrs. Tremaine, not to let her see that he recognized her. He would show perfect ignorance of the past. He believed this would best insure further acquaintance with her. He feared if she saw that he recognized her, she might suddenly disappear, as she had done before.

Mrs. Tremaine had seen Sidney as he stood on the platform before entering the car. She knew him instantly. For a moment, she thought of flight. But no. The life of her child was at stake, perhaps. She must not fail to consult Dr. Cline, and besides, Sidney might not be going to Willow Springs. At any rate, she was mistress of herself and her own actions. She was also financially independent. She would brave the worst. She felt she knew the man, and that he would at once approach her, and she fortified herself for the ordeal.

She was now waiting for him to see her and recognize her, which she felt confident he would do. She apparently became absorbed in her book. But he evidently took no notice of her. He chatted away to different men he met on the train. He passed in and out of the car without apparently bestowing a glance upon her. Hope sprang up in her breast. She knew the man had no delicacy of feeling, and that he would not do this to spare her. She felt confident he would take more pleasure in humiliating her. Then, could it be he really did not recognize her? She arose and went to the dressing-room and critically looked at herself in the glass.

"You poor, poor woman," she soliloquized. You have changed wonderfully. 'Fine feathers make fine birds.' Are you the same woman, with tear-stained face, and the one, rusty, black dress? No; you are not the same. *She* was poor and friendless and a starving outcast; and her name was Multon. She died and was buried eight long years ago. And from her ashes *you* have sprung. You are Mrs. Berenice Allicia Tremaine, wealthy, distinguished, independent. No. I do not believe he recognizes me."

She felt assured of this, when, as she arose to leave the train, she dropped her purse, and Sidney sprang forward and restored it to her, looking her full in the face with not the slightest recognition in his eyes, as he lifted his hat and made one of his most deferential bows. It must be confessed that he was a little taken back by her self-possession.

He was not a little surprised when she alighted at exclusive "Willowby Rest." He knew the rules of the house; and he was anxious to know what key had unlocked the portals, how she had obtained entrance to this charming house. He was at home here. He knew Mrs. Preston well. She was very fond of him, and he soon learned

that when Mrs. Tremaine had written for rooms, she had enclosed a letter of introduction from Governor Van Gordon, of Vermont, who solicited for Mrs. Tremaine and her little, invalid daughter Mrs. Preston's tenderest sympathy. Beyond that, Mrs. Preston knew nothing about her. Governor Van Gordon and his family always spent a few weeks at Willowby Rest every year, and she could not refuse to receive into her house any guest he might send her, even had she wished to decline, which certainly, in this case, she did not. She was charmed with Mrs. Tremaine until she saw what universal attention was bestowed upon her. Then, Mrs. Tremaine minded her own business so thoroughly that for that reason, if for no other, Mrs. Preston was convinced that there was something wrong in regard to her.

Sidney skilfully sought and obtained a formal introduction to Mrs. Tremaine. He was received with politeness. At first, he watched the sensation her personality caused, and it amused him to see how regally she bore herself. He felt that it was a huge joke, and rejoiced that it was an illusion that he could break by a word at any moment.

She was very retiring and sought no one; but her self-possession and dignity commanded the admiration of every one. No one questioned the inmates of Willowby Rest, and it amused him to see how she "took people in," as he put it. He looked upon her as an adventuress. However, her cleverness greatly raised her in his estimation.

He tried to cultivate an intimacy with her, and, at times, to show a warmer emotion; but at the least approach of familiarity, she grew instantly cold. He listened to her as she talked, and found she was possessed of superior mental endowments. Every day she surprised him more and more. He never could manage to get a word with her alone.

About this time, Harry Burbank appeared upon the scene. Sidney hated him as he did Charles. Had not these two men stepped in, years before, and wrested his revenge from him? He soon detected that Harry was interested in Mrs. Tremaine. He watched with baleful, wicked eyes. In vain he tried to discover if his rival found favor. She apparently treated all alike.

Sidney went to the city occasionally. Those days as well as the ones that Mrs. Tremaine spent in her room, began to seem long to him. He began to feel dissatisfied with himself. Little by little, this woman had taken possession of him. Suddenly he realized that he had a different feeling for her than the one that usually thrilled his fancy; that it was more than a passing whim. He cherished her every look, and it seemed to him that life would be really sweeter if he could have this woman to himself. At last, the heart of this worldly, selfish man was touched. He was nearer being in love than ever before.

Harry was proud of his family and name; and, at times, when Sidney saw the honorable and respectful deference with which Harry treated Mrs. Tremaine, he felt it would be a great revenge to see him marry her. But no. He had at last become so attached to her, her image so filled his mind, that even to gratify his desire for revenge he felt he could not give her up. And this human leper began wishing to himself that she was really a decent woman, so he could offer her honorable marriage.

But when he became really infatuated, and tried to give her some proof of it, she chilled him with her cold reception. He became fierce with jealousy.

And now, a new cause of alarm presented itself, that made him tremble for his plans. Mary had appeared upon the scene. He never doubted but that she would

recognize Mrs. Tremaine. He did not take into consideration how little Mary really had seen of Mrs. Multon.

Sidney chanced to be at the station when the Thorntons arrived, and was much chagrined to find they were going to Willowby Rest. When he reached the hotel he met the landlady who gave him, with many embellishments, the scene in detail with Carl. Sidney hated children. He loved to hector them, and he never lost an opportunity to tease Carl. Consequently, Carl hated him thoroughly.

Sidney was about to ascend to his room, when Harry, with pale face and agitated manner, hurried past. He went to the drawing-room door and looked in. He saw Mrs. Tremaine. He felt there had been a crisis of some kind. Harry did not wear the face of a victor. Therefore, Sidney became hopeful. A moment later, Mrs. Tremaine passed him on her way to her room. He noticed her heightened color. Otherwise, she was as self-possessed as ever.

The next day, when they all met in the drawing-room, Sidney was surprised to find that Mrs. Tremaine and Mary had met without recognition. He also was surprised to see Harry approach Mrs. Tremaine as usual; but he did observe one thing, and that was that on Harry's approach the hot blood flooded her face. Instantly he was wild with jealousy. There was a devilish glitter in his eye, as cold and hard as steel, as he covertly watched them. Harry apparently only made some passing remark, and immediately left her.

And this was why Sidney had left the room so suddenly the afternoon before. He felt, that with his failure to come to an understanding with her, he was giving her opportunities of meeting others. He had tried to see her alone, but had always failed. He would put a stop

to it if he had to go to her rooms and force himself upon her. She *should* see him. He had, at last, arrived at the conclusion that love, with her, might have some rapture, be something more than a passing whim. He would ask her to become his wife. He felt sure his millions would be an inducement. Not for a moment did he think of making her legally so; but if he could win her consent, it would be an easy matter to deceive her. He had no scruples about deceiving any woman, and certainly not one of this sort. Of course when she found out the deception, there would be a scene! but that did not matter. Upon realizing that she was in his power, she would then, no doubt, settle down and be reasonable enough.

There was but one thing that puzzled Sidney, and that did give him a good deal of concern. He had been to Clinton, recently, and going into the private office of one of the banks, he stood talking to one of the directors, as the postman laid down the mail. And there, directly on top, was a letter, addressed in a strong, masculine hand, to Mrs. B. A. Multon. He asked no questions; but he knew one of the confidential clerks. After some little delay, he learned that every six months, regularly, a handsome sum of money was deposited in the bank for Mrs. Multon by some unknown man. So far, this was all he could learn. Who could the man be? It passed his comprehension and puzzled him sorely. He was determined to ferret out the whole matter; but now, the thing was to get her to consent to become his wife. So far, Sidney had shown Mrs. Tremaine only his most courtly manners. He did not try to conceal from her, nor from any one, his admiration for her. Indeed, he rather enjoyed the frown he saw gather on the face of more than one woman when he approached Mrs. Tremaine with open admiration.

The next morning, after the dramatic episode in the

drawing-room, when the whole house was in a ferment of gossip and talk about it, he determined to force an interview. Accordingly, he purchased a bunch of queenly roses, and kept them ready in his room, as an excuse for calling on her as soon as he could see the coast clear.

He saw the nurse and maid go out on the lawn with little Ruth. He took the flowers and went at once to Mrs. Tremaine's room. He knocked, once, twice, thrice. No response. He even had the assurance to turn the knob. The door was locked. A good deal disappointed, he was returning to his room, when, glancing into the little reception-room we have before mentioned, he saw Mrs. Tremaine. She was sitting on a low couch, reading a letter. It must be confessed that his heart beat a little faster at sight of her. He had grown fond of her and wanted so much to win her.

Mrs. Tremaine was very happy this morning on account of Ruth's recovery; she had an unusually bright smile as she glanced up at his entrance. A slight shade of annoyance passed over her face as she returned his salutation, which increased when he said, in his most engaging manner, as he presented the flowers:

"I have been looking for you. See; I have brought you the season's choicest offering, this bunch of roses."

She took them mechanically, glanced at them carelessly, slightly inhaling their perfume, and laid them on the couch beside her with an indifferent air.

"Thank you. They are very lovely. You are very kind."

Sidney was watching her narrowly, and her indifference somewhat shook his confidence in himself. His voice was trembling and his face flushed as he said:

"Very lovely? My dear Mrs. Tremaine, do these roses bring you no other message than their beauty? I hoped

they would tell another tale—that they would speak for me what I fear to say for myself."

For once he was terribly in earnest. He really was a very handsome man. As he leaned toward her, his dark, hypnotic eyes were burning into her, his voice was thrilling with the passion and emotion inspired by her presence. She drew back and rising hastily, said:

"Mr. Banks, I do not understand you. You will excuse me."

"Do not go," he said, detaining her. "You do not understand? Do they not tell you that I love you?—that——"

"Stop, Mr. Banks. No—no; not another word, I beg of you. It can do no good and it will be painful to both of us."

"Then you do not love me?"

"I do not."

"Listen to me. I love you sincerely, and I ask you to become my wife."

At these words she turned and looked into those fierce, burning eyes as if she would read his very soul. He stood with beating heart, almost breathless, waiting for her answer.

"I thank you, but I cannot become your wife."

"Why not?" he asked fiercely, growing pale.

"I have no love to give. Let us not prolong this interview, Mr. Banks," said Mrs. Tremaine, turning to leave the room.

"You love another!" said he, detaining her. There was a devilish glitter in his eye.

Mrs. Tremaine drew herself up haughtily.

"You forget yourself, Mr. Banks. You will be good enough to let me pass."

"You love Harry Burbank!" he hissed, as he seized her arm. "But I swear he shall not come between us."

"Mr. Banks," she said imperiously, "it is cowardly to detain a lady against her will."

"A *lady!*" he sneered. "Cowardly?"

"Yes, cowardly. You deserve to be branded publicly as the coward that you are." She was white and trembling.

"Branded publicly!" with a fiendish laugh. "We will see who will bear it best to be branded publicly—you or I, Berenice Multon."

She started as if some one had thrust her with a poinard.

"Ah, ha! you see I know you in spite of your fine airs and splendid dress."

She turned away from him, and, for a moment, seemed overcome as she sank back on the couch.

"I know more than that," he continued. "I know that money is deposited, monthly, in the bank at Clinton for you. You love Harry Burbank. You have, no doubt, thought to entrap him with your haughty ways; to wear his old and honored name; and spend his millions. I hate him, but——"

Mrs. Tremaine put up her hand with a despairing gesture as she almost crouched. Sidney's face was positively satanic as he continued:

"He is proud of his name and his blood. What do you think he would say if he knew who you are? Do you think he would love or marry a woman like you—unknown—who can give no good account of herself; who flaunts and dresses on money that is given her by some man whose mis——"

"Stop! ere woman that I am, I slay you! And you a *man?* Have you no shame?"

She had sprung to her feet. Her eyes were blazing.

"You dare to speak to me like this! You coward!"

She turned to leave the room. He sprang forward and seized her fiercely by the arm.

"You think to spurn me and favor that man. By heaven, you shall not! If you would save your name in this house, look to it. You understand me, now," he said, menacingly.

Wrenching herself loose from his grasp, and drawing herself up to her full height, she exclaimed, triumphantly:

"I understand you fully; but you do not understand me. Know *this:* I love Harry Burbank as I hate and despise you. I love him with all my strength, with all my soul, and I will love him while life lasts and will love him after death. I glory in it. Now, do your worst. I defy you."

Before he could prevent it, she was out of the room.

"Curse her devilish independence! Have I waited all these years to be thwarted now? Not by the beards of all the prophets! I will find some way to humble her. God! Was ever a woman as beautiful as she! No woman ever took such utter possession of me."

He felt he would give worlds to have her say of him what she had said of Harry. He knew Harry would not marry the kind of woman he believed her to be. He was determined to expose her; but first, he would try to find out who this man was that was supplying her with money to live in this sumptuous style.

He went to his room to ponder, and to nurse his wrath. He loved her all the more for her defiant attitude. He had no intention of giving her up. He would lose no time. He would go at once, that very morning, to Clinton, and ferret out the whole matter. He would then have her in his power.

When Mrs. Tremaine reached her room, she almost fell

into a chair. She did not know how much of the past Sidney really knew; and the thought that she might lose favor in the eyes of the man she truly loved, was distracting. Then, summoning all her resolution, she determined to go without delay to Mary and make herself known, and ask for her advice. Donning her hat and catching up a sunshade, she started for Bethesda.

CHAPTER XVII.

DOCTOR CLINE.

Dr. Cline was an eminent German physician and surgeon. He was a Jew. He had a world-wide reputation. He had come to America for the purpose of working out certain scientific problems, which, for special reasons, could be done more advantageously here. He had located at Willow Springs, for the time being. As soon as it became known that he was in this country, he was besieged with patients. He had an office in Willowby Rest Hotel and was resident physician there. But his main office was in the sanatorium where patients were taken and a regular corps of surgeons and nurses was in attendance.

Dr. Cline was a man of culture and wide research. He was humane, broad-minded, and impressed to the highest degree with the responsibility of his position as physician and surgeon. He had added much to his fame since coming to America, where his successes in his profession had been marvelous.

We will ask the reader to go with us to the private offices and operating-room of Dr. Cline at the sanatorium. Here, there were framed diplomas on the wall. A well-mounted skeleton occupied one corner. There were some colored pictures showing the human heart, the lungs, and the interior of the stomach. A colored figure in sections that

could be taken apart to show the anatomy of the human body, a funereal device for generating oxygen, an electrical apparatus, cases of instruments, and operating tables were also to be seen.

At this moment an operation had just been finished in the presence of attendants, medical students, and nurses. The patient lay on a stretcher. Dr. Cline and his associate, Dr. Chester, stood wiping their instruments. There were signs of blood to be seen, and, taken altogether, it was a rather gruesome spectacle—the rigid, ghastly, death-like form on the stretcher, the eager, silent faces of the students and nurses, and the tense look on Dr. Cline's face. Addressing the nurse, he said:

"You must watch him closely. We have done our part; see that you do yours. Remember, a dark room and nothing but liquids."

"I will do my best, Dr. Cline," she replied, as she followed the attendants who were carrying out the patient.

The rest of the students and nurses filed out after her, only the doctors remaining. Dr. Chester sat at a table and was cleaning and polishing his instruments that he had been using. He seemed to take the keenest delight in his occupation. Finally he said:

"It has been a most successful operation."

"It has, indeed, thank God," fervently replied Dr. Cline.

"Oh! by the way, did I tell you about the operation we performed on the brain of a man at Richmond, the other day?"

"No, you did not. What was the operation?"

Dr. Chester, who had been almost caressing his instruments, now holding one between his thumb and finger, suspended his polishing, as he replied with great relish:

"It was an ugly tumor, and required the most delicate handling. The dura-mater was freely opened, and follow-

ing the course of the fibrous growth, and also by removing a small portion of the cortical substance, the whole tumor was successfully extirpated. The knife was used in preference to the galvano-cautery as deemed more promising for the rapid healing of the wound."

"That was indeed a delicate operation," said Dr. Cline, deeply interested. "And it was successful?"

"Oh, yes! the operation could not have been beaten," replied Dr. Chester, resuming his polishing.

"How fortunate. Was there no fever, no complications developed in the patient?" queried Dr. Cline.

"The patient?" said Dr. Chester, looking up, as if that were an altogether secondary consideration. Then laughing he replied: "Oh! he died. But the operation was splendid—one of the most thoroughly scientific I ever saw." He was holding up a beautifully brilliant instrument with a sharp blade, and he added: "How I love these instruments."

A look of surprise, almost of disgust, swept over the face of Dr. Cline, as he replied:

"I only love them for the good they do. I wish I might never have occasion for their use again."

"Well, in a way, I suppose we all feel so," good-naturedly laughed Dr. Chester; "but I love my profession. It is meat and drink to me, and I confess I am never so happy as when I know there is a difficult operation to perform."

"And I always dread it. I have operated on over two hundred and fifty cases, and I never have lost one under the knife; yet, I never take an instrument in my hands to operate with that my heart does not tremble if my hand does not. There is a great responsibility resting upon those who undertake to restore the health and preserve the life of others. No one should assume such risks who does not feel his responsibility to the utmost."

Dr. Cline spoke with much feeling. Dr. Chester was about to reply when an attendant announced to Dr. Cline that a lady wished to see him. Without waiting to hear Dr. Chester's reply, he passed into the next room and found there a lady, about forty years old, fashionably dressed, and evidently a woman of much stability of character. But she had a nervous, anxious look.

"Good morning, Mrs. Grey, good morning," said Dr. Cline. "How is your husband this morning?"

"About the same as usual, Doctor. I have called to talk with you a little more about the operation you propose. Did I understand you to say that the operation could only prolong my husband's life, but would not cure him?"

"Quite true, madam. That is the most we can hope for. Without the operation he cannot live six weeks. If the operation is successful, he may live six months—possibly a year."

"You say if it is successful. Is there any doubt of it being so?"

"My dear madam, we can never tell what complications may arise. Your husband is very weak, and the operation a severe one. Of course, we hope for the best," said Dr. Cline, encouragingly.

At this moment Mr. Burton was ushered into the room.

"Ah! Mr. Burton, good morning," said Dr. Cline, rising.

Mr. Burton, after saluting Mrs. Grey, turned to Dr. Cline:

"I just stepped in for the medicine you suggested for my wife."

"I will get it for you;" and excusing himself to Mrs. Grey, Dr. Cline went into the next room.

"How is your wife, Mr. Burton?" inquired Mrs. Grey.

"She is improving slowly, but still improving. After such a severe operation the recovery must be necessarily slow. However, the worst is over. I feel as if I could not live through it again. The hour my wife was on the operating-table, I suffered a thousand deaths. It is horrible, horrible—not only for the patient, but for those near and dear. I pray God I may never have another such experience."

"But it has been successful? She will get well?"

"Yes. I look upon Dr. Cline as a most wonderful man. He has a world-wide reputation. He has performed some miraculous cures since coming here. But I am selfish. I have not inquired after your husband."

"I am distracted!" nervously exclaimed Mrs. Grey. "The most the doctor promises, in his case, is to prolong his life for a few months. Should the operation not prove successful, I would lose him now. My husband has left it all for me to decide. Oh, I don't know what to do!" and she seemed quite overcome.

Mr. Burton's recent experience awakened in him the strongest sympathy, and he asked:

"May I tell you what I would do?"

"Yes, do," almost hysterically sobbed Mrs. Grey.

"I would consult with the inmates of the new sanatorium."

Mrs. Grey dropped her handkerchief from her tear-stained face and looked at him as if she thought he had taken definite leave of his senses.

"Why, what could they do?" she asked in astonishment.

"I do not know; but in your husband's case, I feel it would do no harm, at least."

"My dear Mr. Burton, some things might be relieved by diverting the mind; but for other diseases I fear the knife is the only remedy."

"You have heard of the cure of Colonel Eversoll? We all know how helpless he was. How do you account for it?"

"The doctor says it was the result of a mental shock, and that he is liable to relapse at any time."

"How does he account for the cure of the little girl?"

"Much in the same way—through excitement of the nerves."

"I admit Dr. Cline's goodness and skill. Nevertheless, you know he pronounced Colonel Eversoll and little Ruth incurable. I have seen them both this morning. The child is very weak; but she can sit up and stand on her feet and walk a little way, and is entirely without pain. The whole expression of her face is changed. She seems perfectly well. And the colonel is radiant. The swelling has almost disappeared from his foot, and he believes he is cured."

"The doctor says it's only temporary."

"Well, suppose he *does* relapse. He is having a little fun in the meantime," laughed Mr. Burton. "If under the treatment of a regular physician he had obtained such relief he would be shouting his praises; and should he relapse he would not blame his physician, but he would employ him again."

"I can't understand it. It all seems such utter nonsense," said Mrs. Grey.

"That is the trouble," said Mr. Burton. "Everything that people don't quite comprehend, they call clap-trap. After all, why should we, as Christians, think it strange? *I* think it's worth investigating, at least. The results that we have seen, demonstrate that it must contain some elements of truth."

"But they say they cure through thought. Now, how can thought cure my husband?" incredulously questioned Mrs. Grey.

"Emerson says, 'We are greater than we know.' Thought is the most potent force in the universe. It infinitely surpasses electric force. We are slowly waking up to simple truths. Thought-currents are creative; and in spite of all the unalloyed humbugs, I am convinced there is something in this theory. As I said before, it can do no harm to try it, and I would not let my prejudice stand in the way."

Mrs. Grey had listened intently to Mr. Burton. She knew he was not a chimerical thinker, and she saw that he had been deeply impressed. There came a bright look in her face as she exclaimed:

"Oh, if it were possible for them to cure my husband!"

"Well, Dr. Cline merely promises to prolong his life. What is mere life without immunity from pain? As near as I can understand it, most patients the metaphysicians have are the 'incurables.'"

"I declare, Mr. Burton, you have almost inspired me with hope. At least it will do no harm to consult with them. Even a few days' respite from pain would be such a relief."

At this moment, the voice of some one in distress came to them from the adjoining room. The door was slightly ajar, and every word was plainly audible.

"Oh, don' you tole me dot, Dr. Cline! Don' say dere vas no hope."

"That ear of yours has been operated upon twice, and the disease is so far advanced that there is no power on earth can save you," came the voice of Dr. Cline.

"Oh, don' say dot, Dr. Cline. I doesn't vant to die. Save me, Dr. Cline. You can do it, I know. I have money—blenty of money. I make you rich. I give you everyding. Only don' let me die."

"Come, come, Mr. Solmon. You and I belong to the

same race; but I shall feel like disowning you if you are not more of a man. Come, brace up; remember we all have to die some time."

"Yes, some dime, but not now—mine Gott! not now, Dr. Cline. I vas not reaty yet. Pi-und-pi, I bees more reaty—pi-und-pi."

"I am sorry, very sorry for you, Mr. Solmon," came the kindly, sympathetic voice of Dr. Cline. "There, take him home, Jacob." And the outer door of the room opened and closed on our old friend, Isaac Solmon.

Dr. Cline entered the room where Mrs. Grey and Mr. Burton were waiting. Dr. Cline gave the medicine to Mr. Burton, saying:

"Instruct the nurse to follow the directions most carefully. This is a very busy morning with me, as we still have another operation to perform. Mrs. Grey, we must look after your husband at once. Delays are dangerous, you know," said Dr. Cline as he bowed Mrs. Grey and Mr. Burton out.

When Dr. Cline re-entered the operating room, the physician and nurses were already there with the patient—a young and beautiful woman of about twenty-five years of age; a Mrs. White. She was clinging convulsively to her husband. Dr. Malridge was with them, and in his tender, fatherly way, he was trying to stimulate the patient with words of hope. The husband and wife were his parishioners. Mr. White was pale as death and very nervous. He turned to Dr. Cline:

"You are sure there is no danger, Dr. Cline?"

"I think not. My dear sir, you must be brave. It is really a very simple operation. It will soon be over. You and Dr. Malridge had better go now."

Mrs. White heard the doctor's words, and stretching out her arms toward her husband, she exclaimed wildly:

"Oh, do not leave me!" and fell unconscious into his arms.

They laid her on a couch, and everything was done to restore her; but to no purpose. At last Dr. Cline said sorrowfully, and with tears in his eyes:

"She is dead—frightened to death, poor child!"

At these words from the doctor, Mr. White, who had been almost beside himself with anxiety, cried:

"Marie, Marie! Dead, dead! Oh, my God!" and he sank like a stricken animal into Dr. Malridge's arms, who, in his most benignant and fatherly manner, said, as he tried to comfort him:

"My son, my son, it is a hard blow! But you must try to bear it; remember it is His will. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord," repeated Dr. Malridge, reverentially.

The hair on the head that rested against the fatherly breast, was black. The body was convulsed with dry, tearless sobs. Not one tear-drop came to relieve the anguished soul. In less than one hour the head was as white as that of an old man.

Later, when Dr. Cline was discussing the events of the morning with Dr. Chester, he said:

"It just demonstrates the power of the mind. There was neither knife nor drug used. There was no need for alarm. There was no reason why she should not have lived for years. If only she could have had a little courage! The thought of the knife frightened her to death. It was undoubtedly her mind; and it was his mind that changed the fluid in his hair and turned it white."

"Take care, Doctor," laughed Dr. Chester. "The first thing we know, you will be joining Mrs. Thornton's ranks."

"No danger," replied Dr. Cline; "I have long believed

in mental therapeutics, to a certain extent; but I have no patience with the persons who are overconfident and believe in the universal efficacy of the mental method."

* * * * * * * *

It is strange when something happens to open our eyes to a truth, how many things we see and hear that verify it —things that previously we passed by without a thought. And now they come before us like a revelation.

When Dr. Malridge left the sanatorium, one of the nurses who was aware of his fondness for roses, handed him a large bunch of long-stemmed American Beauties. Around the stems, she had wrapped a part of a newspaper.

The doctor was very much depressed by the events of the morning. Mr. and Mrs. White were great favorites of his; he had baptized them and married them. He felt they belonged to him.

When he reached Willowby Rest, instead of at once entering the house, he sat down under the shade of a tree. He took off his hat and placed it on the seat beside him; and drawing a snowy handkerchief from his pocket, he passed it over his damp forehead. He really felt quite overcome. He still held the roses in his hand. The delicious perfume that he loved so well, seemed to soothe and refresh him. He lifted them and buried his face in them, inhaling their fragrance. The delicate petals seemed to cool his flushed and heated face. One luscious, half-opened bud seemed too confined by the paper about the stems, and he was about to loosen it that the flowers might have more room, when the following headlines met his eye:

"THE SURGEONS' KNIVES SCARED HER TO DEATH.

"MRS. WALTMAN EXPIRED SUDDENLY AS SHE PREPARED FOR AN OPERATION.

"Mrs. Waltman, wife of John Waltman, of North Bergen, N. J., died suddenly Tuesday afternoon. Mrs. Waltman had been ill for some time, and decided to undergo an operation. The time was set for the operation.

"The physician arrived shortly after noon, prepared for the undertaking. Mrs. Waltman went upstairs and prepared for the physicians. A moment later they were called upstairs by a frightened attendant. Mrs. Waltman was dead.

"The cause of death is attributed to heart disease, brought on by a dread of the results of the operation she was about to undergo. The body will be cremated at Fresh Pond, Long Island."

He looked for the name and date of the paper. It was *The New York Journal,* of January 26th, 1899.

The doctor sighed and recalled Mary's remark of the night before:

"Doctors and clergymen have scared plenty of people to death."

Had he read this same thing a few days previous, he would not have given it any particular thought. Now, it kept recurring to him; but he was not willing to think it was mind. He believed rather in an especial Providence.

* * * * * * * *

On reaching home, Mr. Burton sat down by the side of his wife, and began cutting the leaves of a new maga-

zine. When he had finished he opened it, and the first thing that his eyes fell on was:

"Unkind treatment of cows will generate a poison in their milk. And this unkind treatment is not confined to blows or neglect—a point to be seriously considered by those who have young children dependent on cow's milk. Angry words or loud abuse will disturb cows. Horses, too, are affected in a like manner, and made nervous and irritable by profanity directed against them. Laughter, as we all know, will hurt the feelings of a sensitive dog accustomed to the friendship of a family."

Had Mr. Burton read this a week previous, he would have been as interested in it as he was now; for he was much interested in animals, and had made quite a study of them, and he was fond of learning their peculiarities. But at this moment he was thinking only of his boy; and the hot blood surged to his brow, and a sense of suffocation and a feeling of shame came over him at the recollection of his unintentional neglect. Neither did the fact that it had been unintentional modify his regret of the past. It only increased his mortification that he could have been so miserably blind.

* * * * * * * *

Mrs. Grey stepped into her carriage, after leaving Dr. Cline's office, and drove away. She was sick at heart. The little flame of hope that had flickered up in her heart, lasted but a moment. She was a very domestic woman. She loved her home and her husband. They were moderately well off, and she had passed an unusually happy married life. Her husband was three years her senior, just in his prime. She felt keenly the cruelty of losing him now and that she never could become recon-

ciled to it. She was completely lost in her own gloomy forebodings. Mrs. Thornton, Mr. Burton, all had drifted entirely from her mind when the carriage drew up before her own cottage. She ascended the steps wearily. She met her daughter, Edna, at the door, who informed her that her father was sleeping, and that luncheon was waiting.

At the table, her daughter was reading little paragraphs from the morning paper. Suddenly she remarked:

"Here is a peculiar thing;" and she read:

"'The infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Claude Hamersley passed away yesterday morning. Until night before last the child was in perfect health, and a peculiar reason is assigned as the cause of the sudden death. It seems that day before yesterday morning, Mr. Hamersley's horses took fright and started to run away. Mrs. Hamersley, watching them from the window, saw her husband thrown violently from the buggy. She thought he was killed. She ran to him and was relieved when she found he was only stunned. But she was terribly frightened, became hysterical, and it was some time before she could recover control of herself. She nursed her babe as usual. Very soon afterward he went into spasms and died. The physicians claimed death was caused by the fright of the mother which poisoned the milk in the breast.

"'It is wonderful, when one comes to think about it, what a power the mind really is and what an influence it has over the body.'"

"Do you think it could be possible that a fright to the mother could cause the death of the child?" asked Edna.

"I have heard of similar cases," replied her mother, her mind at once reverting to the conversation with Mr.

Burton, "but I never thought of it in that light before. It never occurred to me that it was mind in operation."

"Isn't that something like the ideas they say Mrs. Thornton advances?"

"I think so," replied Mrs. Grey; and she recounted to her daughter the whole of the conversation with Mr. Burton.

Mr. Burton had a reputation for excellent judgment; and hearing that he had advised her mother to consult Mrs. Thornton, Edna became very much interested, and she exclaimed excitedly:

"You will go, mamma, won't you? Who knows? Perhaps something may yet be done for dear papa. Do not delay; but go at once. I wish you would let me go with you."

"You shall go if you wish," said Mrs. Grey, rising. "Do you know, when Mr. Burton talked to me, I felt a little hope; but I lost it all before I reached home. That article in the paper has given me new hope. If mind can do so much harm it may have the power to do some good."

After consulting with the nurse and finding her husband was still resting, she, with her daughter, entered the carriage to drive to Bethesda Sanatorium.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BETHESDA SANATORIUM, AND COTTAGE PLACE.

THE cure of Colonel Eversoll and little Ruth had caused a wonderful commotion, in comparison to which an earthquake would have been tame. And the announcement that the new Sanatorium belonged to Mrs. Thornton, and that it would be under her personal supervision, came like a thunder-clap to Willow Springs, and to Mary's acquaintances, especially. Never had anything caused such a sensation. Had Mary eloped with some gay Lothario, or had she left Charles and sued for a divorce, dragging the disgusting details through the courts, with the exposure of compromising letters and questionable situations, supplying the newspapers with columns of sensational matter which would not fail to show that her father, Charles, and Gertrude were only secondary matters and as nothing to her in her selfish pursuits, all this and much more probably would have been condoned by the majority, with only a few ripples on the surface of society. But to open a sanatorium and supervise it herself, and to ally herself to a movement of this sort—in short, to become odd, was too much. There was but one conclusion to be drawn in the general mind: She had gone stark, staring, raving mad. There was much comment from every one, but principally from effete men

without self-respect and from women of the "smart set," who affected the graces and conduct of ladies without being ladies; who had little breeding, and whose only influence in the charmed circle was measured by the weight of their gold. But this class of people, while belonging to it, did not comprise the whole of the smart set. Mary had certainly overstepped the limits heretofore prescribed by the circle in which she had always lived and moved. She was a woman of wealth, good birth, and highly accomplished. She was intellectual, young, beautiful, and was fast becoming an acknowledged leader. She was sure of her position. Such women are able to do many surprising things.

So, the men and women talked and talked. The sun rose on one horizon and set upon the other, and still they talked, wondered and conjectured. It now remained to be seen what construction society would put upon this departure from prescribed rules; whether it would drop her, or would she drop society, or whether either event would happen.

* * * * * * * *

The home that was now to be Mary's was admittedly one of the most attractive at the Springs. It was beautifully located, and belonged to a wealthy New Yorker. It had been a farm for raising and training fine stock. About a quarter of a mile from the house, was what had once been a speedway. Near this were two immense barns two stories high; and leading off to the left of these, were about thirty or forty small stables.

Before the snow was fairly off the ground, the previous spring, an army of painters, carpenters, and gardeners had appeared, and under the guidance of a still-mouthed contractor, the place had been completely transformed. The stables had been turned into well furnished cottages.

One of the barns was made into a sitting-room, library, billiard- and smoking-rooms, all well and substantially furnished. There were also a large dining-room and kitchen. The other barn had been turned into dormitories, above and below, which were furnished with white enamelled beds standing in rows, and looking so snowy and cool that they were tempting enough to induce sleep to the most wakeful.

A long wooden building had been erected for a bowling-alley, gymnasium, baths, etc. The center of the speed-way was turned into golf links and tennis courts. There were many shade trees that had been well trimmed. An abundance of shrubbery had been set out, and now, the grass, which was well mowed and cared for, was thick and velvety. Over the high gateway was the name: "Cottage Place." It was certainly very attractive and looked like a little village. The balance of the land belonging to the farm, was in the hands of a capable tenant, and was in a high state of cultivation.

The residence belonging to the estate was very large, the former owner being a man fond of entertaining. It was very modern. There was nothing wanting to insure every comfort: a large sun parlor; a spacious drawing-room; library, music- and billiard-rooms; an extensive, handsomely decorated dining-room; a conservatory well filled with rare plants and tropical blooms; a broad piazza giving a long promenade. The whole house, above and below, was light and airy. It had been well and tastefully refurnished throughout. There had been no architural change made in the house, except the addition of one very large room. This we wish to describe:

The house was built like two enormous wings springing from the conservatory that joined them in the center. The room that had been added to the house was oval in

shape. One end swelled out from side to side, and formed a large stained glass window; the other end of the room projected into the conservatory. There were three archways at this end, the central one jutting back in the form of a crescent recess; this recess was closed in with glass. From the floor up to the height of four feet the glass was shaded brown and olive; above that to the height of three feet it was shaded a heavenly blue; and inwrought into this, in the richest and warmest crimson was the word, "Love," that glimmered and glowed like living fire. Above this, the glass that closed in and formed the canopy, was a rich lemon color through which the light from above fell like a golden halo. The floor of this recess was a dais, raised about six inches. The walls of the room were done in warm rose-color. The floor was inlaid and highly polished. The doorways were arched, and on one side, led into the library; on the other, into the great drawing-room. The fluted pillars that supported the arches, and the heavy cornices of doors and windows were enamelled in pure white with fillets of gold. Over all the archways, doors, and windows, was a raised filigree work of leaves and flowers and gold. Into these were cunningly and artistically inwrought tiny gold-colored incandescent lights, forming a word or sentence over each door and window. When lighted, these burned and scintillated brilliantly. The word in the arch over the dais was "Truth." The right archway had "Hope"; the left "Faith." Over the door to the library was the word "Health," while that over the door to the drawing-room was "Happiness." Over the great arched window was the sentence: "If ye have faith, nothing shall be impossible to you." Above the cornice was a row of concealed incandescent lights for illuminating purposes.

The floor was strewn with soft and rich-toned rugs;

luxurious chairs, inlaid tables, and divans were scattered about. Hanging-baskets with trailing vines, flowers, and ferns, were suspended from the archways that led to the conservatories. On the dais were a small divan and a table. On this was a jardiniere of antique design filled with rare roses. A few handsome paintings in gold frames adorned the walls. Silken portières of rose-color, embroidered and fringed in gold, draped the archways and doors. The whole of this beautiful room was closed in by a lofty dome-shaped ceiling of stained glass, that represented Christ sitting in the midst of his disciples, with a little child at His feet, warning them in the following language:

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

"And who so shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

"But who so shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

The stained glass in the window, represented Christ speaking to His disciples and pointing to a mountain, after he had cured the lunatic, according to the account given by St. Matthew:

"And when they were come to the multitude, there came to Him a certain man, kneeling down to Him and saying,

"Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is a lunatic, and sore vexed: for ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

"And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him.

"Then Jesus answered him and said, Oh, faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to me.

"And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

"Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

"And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

At the moment our chapter opens, this room is vacant. The tone and coloring are perfect, and the room is so cool with its "dim, religious light," so restful to the eye and brain. The very chairs and divans, with their downy pillows, seem to be inviting repose and meditation. You hear, as in a dream, the birds softly singing in the conservatory and the musical plashing of the water in the fountains. The sweet scent of flowers is in the air. The world, with its cares and follies, its bickerings and heart-burning jealousies, seems so far away.

This is the Temple of Bethesda.

In the library, a fine pipe-organ has been built.

On the stone, over the high-arched front doorway, the name of the place has been carved: *Bethesda.* Across the arch, in letters of gold, and in plain text, are the words: *Divine Healing.* Aside from this doorway, the house has the appearance of any other well-regulated country mansion.

CHAPTER XIX.

SOCIETY IS SHOCKED.

On the lawn in front of Willowby Rest, lounged several gentlemen, smoking. It needed but a glance to tell one that they were all men of the world. Experience was more or less written on each face.

The youngest of the group was Bennie Gordon. He was as pretty as a girl, with a fresh English complexion. He had been educated abroad, and had acquired the English drawl and accent. He had a good figure, but he was small and decidedly dapper. He was really a queer little chap; but the best of his kind. His father was one of the merchant-princes of New York. Bennie's mother died when he was only a child, and his father idolized him. Besides being prospective heir to his father's money, he had inherited a large fortune from his maternal grandfather. So, Bennie had no need to worry about rainy days.

Another of the group was Donald Barry. He was half English and half American. His father, the eldest son of an English lord, and heir to both title and fortune, while traveling in America, met and married the belle of Houston, Texas; for which, as she was not a great heiress, he was immediately disinherited. With the as-

sistance of his wife's relatives he went into business and managed to get along fairly well. When Donald was twenty years old, his father died, leaving his mother with two children: himself and his sister Annie, who was, at that time, fifteen years old.

When Donald's grandfather heard of the death of his son he sent for Donald to come to England, stating that if he was the right sort of a fellow, he should have his father's name and title. The amount of money Donald's father had been able to leave was not great, and his mother, feeling it was for her son's good, urged him to go to England.

Donald was a splendid fellow, but reckless and wild. He had ridden with the Texas Rangers, slept on the Texas plains, hunted Indians, and could lariat a horse or brand a cow.

His hair was a tawny yellow, his eyes brown; and as a boy, he was as freckled as a turkey's egg, and a few freckles still lingered on his face.

Donald went to England as heir presumptive to his grandfather's title and fortune. The restraint was fearful to this untamed boy who had known the wild freedom of Texas frontier life. At times, he would break all bounds and dressed in a cow-boy suit, would mount a horse and startle the neighbors with Indian war-whoops and cow-boy yells, as he rode like mad through the village. He remained two years in England, and during that time his grandfather became deeply attached to this wild, harum-scarum boy. His reckless, dare-devil capers only seemed to endear him the more.

But Donald grew more and more homesick, and finally threw up all claims to title and fortune, declaring to his grandfather that he would rather live and die as a "yaller dog" in America, than to be heir presumptive to the

throne of England. He announced his intention of returning to America at once, and taking up the care of his mother and sister as best he could.

This was a great shock to his grandfather, and after much discussion, a compromise was suggested. It was that Donald should bring his mother and sister to New York to live, and that he would spend not less than three months out of every year in England; the grandfather hoping, thereby, to gradually win him to remain for good. He was supplied with a princely income, and had now been living in New York for two years. He had just returned from his annual visit abroad. He was much sought after on account of his title and money. He was really a splendid fellow, with a world of good, hard, practical sense, and without a particle of arrogance or assumption. He was a general favorite, especially with the men. Not one but was fond of Donald. He seemed to carry with him a bit of that pure, fresh western breeze in which he was raised. Though full of fire and hot-tempered, he was generous, frank, and hospitable. He was devoted to his mother and his sister, who was now a young lady. His mother was still a beautiful and brilliant woman.

Donald, Bennie, and Dick Braintree, were sworn allies. Dick and Bennie were own cousins, and Bennie was Dick's shadow. They were together now, as usual.

Richard Braintree was much older than Bennie or Donald. He was past thirty-five. He had been a society idol since he was twenty, and of late years the round of gayeties had become fatiguing and unpleasant. He had arrived at that stage of his life when nothing interested him very much, and he was constantly bored.

"What's a fellow to do? You can't get away from it, you know," said Dick, as he yawned and continued to allow himself to be bored. He was about five feet, eight

inches tall, broad shouldered and well built, and generally considered handsome. Had it not been for the apathy of the man he might really have been so; but he reminded one of the expressed essence of chloroform. It did not seem as if an earthquake could startle Dick. When he was a boy in school he had been a fiery chap; but of late he seemed to have lost it all. His mornings were spent in bed, his afternoons in the Park, his evenings at some fashionable gathering where he was sure to be the observed of all observers. His father had spent his life in accumulating one of the largest fortunes in America, and now, broken in health, and without the power to enjoy his money, he, with his wife and youngest son, was traveling abroad. There had been two sons and a daughter. The daughter had married a Russian nobleman, who had broken her heart. Dick's father had already divided his fortune between his two sons, the daughter's portion also coming to them, as she had died childless. Dick was the richest young man in New York, and he was much courted in consequence. More than one woman had studied and planned how to bring him to her feet. When rallied about getting married, Dick always declared he was waiting to find a girl with a soul—although just what Dick meant by that no one exactly knew as he seemed to have so little himself. Nevertheless, with all his apathy, he was tremendously popular. In society he was a sort of social Cæsar; but in his club it is no exaggeration to say that he was an idol. He spent his money like a prince. He was master of his father's house on Fifth Avenue, and he was a law unto himself. He had always been independent; but every one thought it was the independence that comes from the possession of gold. They had yet to learn of what material the man was made. His independence and his gold gave him great prestige. His

opinions were highly regarded, and in many ways he was the censor of his club.

Dick had always known the Starkweathers. He had been one of young Hugh's best friends; while his sister and Mary had been intimate friends. Dick had always possessed the warmest regard for Mary. He, Bennie and Donald, with a lot of other fellows, had come down to the Springs to kill a few weeks' time before the opening of the Newport season, and, as Donald put it, to drink a few barrelfuls of water.

Donald was regaling the group with some freshly imported stories, that must have been highly amusing, judging from the roars of laughter that greeted a number of ladies, who now descended from the house, followed by an army of servants with rugs, chairs, sunshades, fans, etc. The gentlemen at once arose, and soon there was a merry, laughing party that was continually being reinforced or diminished by the coming of some and the going of others. There was a good deal of wit and also gay repartee; there was much adjusting of silken skirts and languorous glances, shot from beautiful eyes, before every one was comfortably settled and ready for a bit of gossip. They were a polished set, and yet, with but few exceptions, they were gossips, none the less; and had a fondness for minding other people's business.

There was a little casual chatter, and then the conversation naturally turned upon the events of the day previous. There was very little logic. The conversation was rather desultory, as it was frequently interrupted by persons coming and going, who entered into the conversation for a few moments, and then dropped out of it. There were young and old; and all felt free to express opinions. The transactions of the day previous was the theme of conversation.

"Isn't it queer?" said one.

"It's nonsense," said another.

"I wonder if Mrs. Thornton can cure everything;" and in a moment they all seemed to be talking at once.

"Ah!" said Dick, "only the other day you were wishing the old hackneyed wish for something new. Now you have it with a vengeance, and yet you are not satisfied."

"Well, it's the most preposterous stuff to say Mrs. Thornton did it. Why, we have all heard of sudden shocks or frights having the same effect. Even the colonel knows it was the fright that caused it," said Mrs. Brownell.

"Yes, it seems not only curious, but idiotic when examined in the light of common sense. There really must be something the matter with Mrs. Thornton's mental furniture, if she can take the credit of making these cures," said Mr. Sidley.

Mr. Sidley was a great society man, and considered himself irresistible. He spent his time studying chiefly how to make himself agreeable. He was past forty, a bachelor, and thoroughly blasé. He had been in the social swim all his life. He flattered himself he could make an impression on any woman he chose, married or single. With Mrs. Thornton he had signally failed, and he was a little piqued in consequence.

"Oh, don't worry about her brainery," said Donald. "You will find there is nothing the matter with that."

"No, by Jove!" chimed in Bennie; "and if shocks have such a wonderful effect in performing cures, I cawn't see why the doctors don't have a lot of ready-made shocks to turn on on short notice. It would be great, you know, and save a lot of trouble."

"It's a deuced queer thing for her to be mixed up in," said Sidley.

"Well, she has killed herself socially," said Mrs. Brownell, spitefully.

"I am sorry," said Mrs. Delacey, adjusting her lace skirts, and shading her face beneath her rose-colored parasol. "I look upon this fad of Mrs. Thornton as a real calamity. She was so popular as a young girl, and since her marriage she has grown more and more so. She could and would have become unquestionably one of the strongest leaders in society. She has all the qualifications—beauty, intellect, money and birth."

"Oh, no one will be so rash as to dispute her claims to high social rank among the leaders in the land," said Mrs. Brownell; "but who wants to take her cue socially from the keeper of a sanatorium?"

"She is without question a genuine original—no imitation; but her originality is so concealed. She accentuates herself, but so gently is it done, so unostentatiously, that it is hardly apparent. You have to think about it some time before you are really aware of it."

This was said by another blasé society man—Norwood Brinsley, who had gone all the gaits of a bachelor of nearly fifty. He was an habitué of all high, social functions. He apparently never had been interested in anything more serious than the latest importations from his London tailor, or in the newest dance, a fast horse, or a handsome woman; and usually, the gayer and more frivolous the woman, the deeper was his interest. Therefore, it was with some surprise that those present listened to his remarks.

"One would think you admired that style of woman," said Mrs. Wilson, with a satirical laugh, as she mentally recalled her own flirtations with this man of many liaisons.

"I do immensely," he replied. "In the fashionable world I consider she has no peer."

Mrs. Wilson bit her lip with annoyance; then said with scorn:

"Well, to tell the truth, I think there is a lot of pretence about it all. She talks about the Bible and religion, yet she hasn't a bit of the soul-saving way with her. She dresses and dances and chatters as much as any one."

"Ah! you have hit it exactly. I have just said she is an original. I see you agree with me," said Brinsley, with a twinkle in his eye. "She can talk more sensible nonsense, with flashing eyes and sparkling wit, than any woman I ever saw. And, as to religion, if that is what makes her so attractive, I wonder others don't cultivate it."

"Do hear that man talk," laughed Mrs. Delacey, coquettishly shaking her parasol at him. "One would think you were smitten, sure enough. I think I'll warn Charles when I see him."

"Oh, don't go to romancing! Can't a fellow admire a clever woman without that? I admire her because she is no hypocrite, no namby-pamby. She has a lot of good red blood in her veins. Gad! Why, I'd go miles just to sit and look at her," said Brinsley, enthusiastically.

"I have known her ever since she came out," said Mr. Sidley, "and I always have thought her cold and distant. I think her unromantic and lacking in true, womanly feeling."

"So she is to *some* people," retorted Dick Braintree, significantly. He said it in a tone that made Sidley feel as if some one had dropped ice down his back.

"Even the sun is interested and inquisitive in regard to our gossip. You see, he is trying to peer down through

the branches," said Donald, quizzically, noticing Mrs. Delacey trying to shade her face more effectually.

"I think the wind has stopped to listen to the gossip, too, as it has forgotten to blow," said Bennie, as he fanned his face with his hat. "What a lot Mrs. Thornton will have to answer for."

"Well," said Donald, with a slight note of impatience in his voice, "there is one thing about all this that I can't quite comprehend. It is this: We all have seen the child, and know what a sufferer she was; and we all know how helpless the colonel was. Now, one would naturally suppose that anything that could possibly relieve either of them would be hailed with delight, no matter who did it or by what means it was done. Some say it's all imagination. Well, suppose it is. What difference does it make? The unreasoning prejudices of the people have allowed them to attack Mrs. Thornton as if they were ravening wolves; and as if she had introduced some dread disease instead of conferring a blessing. I'll be hanged if I understand it. I believe you will all be glad to see the colonel and little Ruth get sick again, just to have the opportunity of saying, 'I told you so.'"

"Oh, no, we wouldn't, Donald, my boy!" said Mr. Sidley, with a covert sneer. "We don't want Mrs. Thornton to miss the opportunity of securing that little badge which she evidently expects to get, up in Paradise. You know they keep them up there for people like her, with queer ideas."

"How exceedingly brilliant, Mr. Sidley!" said Edith, sarcastically. "Can you not secure your appointment as arbiter of wit? It's a pity for you to hide your talents."

"Whatever have I done to you that you should be so cruel?" said Sidley, in a plaintive voice. But Edith did not deign to reply.

"Well, she is far ahead of any of us. *She* has come here to work. *We* have come here and are lolling under the shade of the trees. We eat and drink and read and sleep and talk, and loll some more. Sometimes, if not too hot, we dance and ride and walk. She is devoting her time to doing other and more useful things; and as for health, look at her—look at her child. Look at Judge Thornton. They are pictures. The very atmosphere she sheds comes upon one like a sort of magical perfume. Her talk runs on like the murmur of a brook. She is not only beautiful and rich, but she is a philanthropist."

All this from lazy, indolent Dick Braintree! Again there was a gasp from the ladies. "What is the matter with the men?" thought Mrs. Wilson, as Dick and Donald now left them to speak to a man that had just come from the house. Dick did not know nor care a fig about the matter, but he was Mary's friend and he admired her; and somehow she never bored him. He was quite sure she never preached to him. She was one of the few women whose conversation he always remembered and dwelt on afterward.

"I think Mr. Braintree is quite right. When one remembers what Mrs. Thornton has undertaken, it seems quite wonderful," said Miss Stevens, thoughtfully.

"Oh, I suppose we will have a sight of the slum-dwellers, down at those cottages," said Mrs. Wilson. "It makes me sick. I shan't be astonished at anything after this. It wouldn't surprise me, now, to have Mr. Carnegie or Mr. Rockefeller, or some one else, pick up the slums of New York and set them down bodily in the heart of Newport."

Everybody laughed at Mrs. Wilson's plaintive voice.

"Oh, don't worry about the slum-dwellers at the cottages!" said Miss Stevens. "The cottages are beautiful

—so well furnished and so comfortable, and they are to be occupied by ladies and gentlemen."

"Ladies and gentlemen!" exclaimed half a dozen voices in a breath. "What do you mean?"

"I mean just what I say. They are ladies and gentlemen. Their only misfortune is being poor."

"Oh, I see!" coldly and sarcasticaly exclaimed Sidley. "Slum-dwellers are to be called ladies and gentlemen hereafter. Mark that.

"'In spite of Juliet and her rose,
There's a good deal in a name, God knows.'"

"You are mistaken, Mr. Sidley," replied Miss Stevens, with a slight curve of her lip. "They are people who are, in the truest sense, ladies and gentlemen of refined tastes and aspirations; people who are struggling, almost starving, in order to make something of themselves—musicians, artists, actors, students of various kinds, clerks, and bookkeepers. There is one whole family there—man, wife and three children. The father, at one time, was quite an influential Wall Street man. He lost his money and at about the same time he became an invalid through a stroke of paralysis; and for three years he has been wholly dependent on his eldest daughter for the support of himself, wife, and two young children. They are all refined. The daughter is well educated and gets a good salary; but all she can earn is only enough to pay rent and eke out a meagre existence for a family of five. The girl was rapidly failing from the awful strain, and but for Mrs. Thornton, they would have been obliged to remain in the city through the hot weather. She made some sort of arrangement with the firm the young lady is working for, to give the girl a rest for three months;

and she has brought the whole family here, and they have a little cottage all to themselves. There are two art students, clever, talented, bright, handsome fellows that have been struggling along in their profession on the barest pittance, literally starving. They have refined tastes and have been well brought up. There are a number more just like them. There is a large work-room fitted up for their use. There are several pianos for the use of the students of music. They are, one and all, very, very poor; but all are workers. Those I have mentioned, are, as I understand it, merely samples of the others. There are people there that are too proud to beg. They would die first. There is a fund for the really poor slum-dwellers; but for this class of people, who are in truth greater sufferers, there seems to be nothing. How she manages to find them out is a mystery to me."

"No doubt she would have been as willing to initiate you into one mystery as another. When she was telling you all about them, why didn't you ask for information on that point, also?" asked Mrs. Brownell.

"She has told me nothing about it," replied Miss Stevens, with slight irritation; "but in order that you may know where I obtained my information I shall tell you all. This morning, Edith and I went for a long walk, and while out, we met a young girl that I know very well. She attended the same school with me a number of years ago. Her parents were then in comfortable circumstances; but reverses came, and she has had to earn her own living. She was so changed I hardly knew her. She is now a protegée of Mrs. Thornton, and is staying at Cottage Place. She has a glorious voice, but has never had any one to push her forward, and did not know how to do it herself. She was very nearly discouraged, and about to give up in despair, when she was

fortunate enough to meet Mrs. Thornton. It is from her I learned all I know about the people down at Cottage Place."

"Oh, I say, I propose we all go down and inspect this Paradise," said Mrs. Wilson. "It is yet early, and we should have plenty of time. I hear the cottages are already filled."

"I second the motion," exclaimed Horace Burt, springing to his feet. He had listened keenly to the conversation, but had kept silent. He was something of a social parasite. On account of his family being an old one, he had the entrée to the inner circles. He had squandered most of his money, and had now become a dollar-hunter, and eked out his limited income by giving choice bits of news to papers that were willing to pay handsomely for glimpses into corners where their reporters could not enter. This and an occasional lucky stroke at the gaming-table, or a tip given at the races, were his only financial resources. He catered to those that had money as it was a thing he most needed. He had always dangled after Donald, Bennie and Dick. Lately, he had been seen a good deal with Sidney Banks.

"Come!" he cried, "how many will go? I will order the carriages."

"Let me save you the trouble, Mr. Burt," interrupted Edith. "You would not be admitted if you went."

"Why not?" asked Burt in surprise.

"For the reason that the occupants of the cottages are just what Isabel has told you. They are ladies and gentlemen, and are not there for inspection any more than you and your apartment here at the hotel."

"But they are objects of charity," asserted he. "There is a great difference, I think."

"They are not made to feel that they are objects of

charity. They have been invited as guests of Judge and Mrs. Thornton, who would not subject them to the indignity," retorted Edith, with a little glad ring in her voice.

Mrs. Wilson gave a little sniff in the air; but she did not care to antagonize Edith.

Miss Stevens laughed as she said: "I have been sitting here listening to all of you talking about how Mrs. Thornton has imperilled her social position through her philanthropic work and the erection of those cottages."

"Well, I think all of us have always admired Mrs. Thornton," came the voice of Mrs. Delacey; "and no one would object to her giving whatever she sees fit. That is her own business; but to deliberately associate herself with a thing of this sort and to give it her personal supervision, is quite another matter. However, it is a question of taste. If she prefers it, all right; but, of course, it ostracises her from society as to claims to anything more than mere recognition."

"Yes," said Mrs. Wilson, with an appealing expression, "and to think that for the past two years her gowns have been the talk of our set—so exquisite in taste, you know. We all supposed the Thorntons would open their new town-house this winter. I suppose, now, they will turn it into a hospital."

"The winter she was abroad we all missed her very much," asserted Mrs. de Lorme, "and we can ill spare her now."

The truth of the matter was that Mary always attended so entirely to her own affairs and paid so little attention to other people's, that she was not an object of jealousy. When a man went mad about her, and raved over her beauty and accomplishments, beyond a slight pang at the "raver," it had no more effect than if they had raved

about a rare painting or article of virtu. Had Mary been a married flirt, they could have spared her more easily.

"Then it is only *now* that you object to her—since she has taken possession of Bethesda?" asked Miss Stevens.

"Oh, certainly! Until now, there has been no occasion for any complaints against her—only admiration," answered Mrs. Delacey.

"And yet," said Miss Stevens, in a triumphant voice, and with laughing, twinkling eyes, "for nearly ten years she has been in this new line of thought; and for the past five years she has been carrying on a philanthropic scheme most successfully, by the side of which this project of Bethesda is a mere baby. Yet you have all sought her during that time, admired her gowns, and have been willing to take any social cue she gave."

"What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Wilson.

"Oh, that is another story," replied Miss Stevens, mysteriously. "I will leave you to find it out. To my personal knowledge she does not now, nor ever has aspired to be a social leader. However, I have, with several others, an appointment to lunch with her to-day, and I also have a message to deliver to all those who desire to know anything about her metaphysical studies. She requests me to say that to-morrow morning, at eleven o'clock, there will be a service in the little temple in her house, and that you and any friends you may desire to bring with you will be welcome."

Miss Stevens was distinguished for her clear thinking. An idea seemed to strike Mrs. Delacey and she asked:

"Do you believe in this new philosophy, Miss Stevens?"

"I have studied it much. I have not mastered it as

yet. I believe in it firmly; but I am not able to demonstrate all that I believe to be facts."

Edith almost gasped at this declaration from Miss Stevens.

"But I am told you can't get Mrs. Thornton to talk on the subject," said Sidley, with a shrug of his shoulders and an expression of incredulity.

"That is a mistake, I am sure," replied Miss Stevens. "I think it is true, though, that she never argues."

"That is because she has laid down something that she can't handle herself," said Horace; "and yet she expects to make disciples. But when you see the clever people who take up with this idea"—with an admiring glance at Miss Stevens—"it makes one believe in the power of asserting a thing; then sitting down and sticking to it with closed lips."

"There are some people," replied Miss Stevens, "who ignore or imperfectly appreciate the fallacy of discussion. They cannot understand the inspiring motives that cause Mrs. Thornton to shun all kinds of contention. She knows and understands the immense power of the mind; that it is an exhaustless fountain, rolling forever onward with ever increasing impetus; and that it will quicken and fertilize other minds more effectually than all the arguments she could present."

"Well, the arguments you bring to bear are quite unique," said Horace, laughing. "Miss Stevens is trying to prove that silence is golden."

"I think I agree with Miss Stevens," chimed in Norwood Brinsley. "There is something about Mrs. Thornton that makes her manner more persuasive and powerful than spoken language. It is in her hand-clasp; in the interest she shows in you; and it gleams from her eyes. If there is anything I despise, it's a man or woman

that is always ready to lecture or argue—that has a hobby and is ever galloping with it, whether or no, over people's heads. As I said before, she is an original, and as such I make my most profound bow to her. Please convey my compliments to Mrs. Thornton and say that I shall certainly accept her kind invitation for to-morrow."

He finished his remark standing, as Mrs. Brandt had just driven up, and Edith and Miss Stevens had risen to respond to the calls of Dick and Donald, who were waiting for them. They took their leave at once, followed by Bennie.

Mrs. Brandt stopped to exchange a few words with the little group on the lawn before entering the house; and when some one asked her if she intended going to Mrs. Thornton's service the next morning, and if she would have Mrs. Thornton attempt to heal Pansy, she replied:

"I shall go, I presume, but I shall not be wheedled into any nonsense. Pansy's troubles are not imaginary; they are hard facts. It would take more than the metaphysical science of Mrs. Thornton or the shock caused by seeing some one faint to cure *her*. As I was returning, a little while ago, I picked up Dr. Malridge, and set him down at Judge Thornton's. He is very much upset over the stand Mrs. Thornton is taking in these matters. He thinks she is adrift religiously and I am inclined to think so myself. Mary Thornton has always been a pet of mine. No one can know her and not love her. Every year she has grown more popular and more indispensable to her friends; and it is the impression of those that know about these things, that Judge Thornton will be elected to Congress. They are both deservedly popular; but I greatly fear the stand she is taking is going to be disastrous in more ways than one. I am afraid it will hurt her husband politically. She is the last person I

would have expected to take up with this kind of fad. From an intellectual standpoint, I have always looked upon her as a model. It never occurred to me that she could possibly lose her balance in this way. I am sorry I cannot remain longer with you, you all look so cool and comfortable; but I think I must go to look after Pansy."

Mrs. Brandt had spoken sincerely and with deep concern. She was really very much distressed over Mary's departure from the conventional standard.

Mrs. Brandt was a very handsome woman. The years and cares of maternity sat lightly upon her. Her husband was one of the wealthiest railroad kings in America. She had known no real sorrow except Pansy's affliction.

When Mrs. Brandt had mentioned Charles' political prospects there was a gleam in the eye of Horace Burt; and, as she left them, he took out his notebook and made a memorandum.

"I am very curious," said Mrs. Wilson, meditatively, "to know what Miss Stevens meant by Mrs. Thornton's other philanthropic work."

"Oh, nothing, I fancy," said Mrs. Brownell; "I think she wanted to excite our curiosity. No one could do a large work of that kind for five years without somebody finding it out. But tell me, are you going to Mrs. Thornton's to-morrow?"

Mrs. Wilson had taken her cue from Mrs. Brandt. If Mrs. Brandt could go, why *she* would go. She was one of the kind that always followed others. And Mrs. Brandt was unquestionably to be followed. So, she replied, enthusiastically:

"Of course I'm going. I wouldn't miss it for anything. I'm consumed with curiosity. Just think of Mary Thornton lecturing or preaching!" This brought a general laugh.

"Wouldn't she be a corker as a Salvation Army lassie?" said Horace Burt. And again they all laughed.

"No," said Norwood Brinsley, "she would be out of her element. I could never think of her as tramping around in the muddy streets, beating a tambourine. No doubt, there is plenty of that kind of work to be done, and there are many good and handsome women that are doing it; but it's not *her* line any more than it would be the line of work for the Virgin Mother to come down and do. The Virgin's mission was to give to the world a high and holy Son, and make the world good through Him. Mrs. Thornton has found her work and her mission will be to make thoughtful, good men and women in the world in which she moves. I heard Clara Potter say of her, last night, that she would like to be as beautiful, mentally and spiritually, as Mrs. Thornton is. And Fanny Carruthers declared the same thing, and spoke of the wonderful fascination about her. I think this shows Mrs. Thornton's influence for good, and that the leaven is working. As for myself, I have known her for years. I never am in her society ten minutes without wishing I was a better man. And from this time forward, I am her's to command," said Brinsley, rising. "And I am not going to remain to hear you make sarcastic and light remarks about one of the most superb women of the day." Saying which, he lifted his hat, laughing lightly, bowed, and took his leave.

A good sized bomb thrown in their midst could not have astonished them more; and there was silence for an instant. Then, a dear, white-haired woman, with heavenly eyes, said, as her glance followed his disappearing figure:

"And I have heard it said that that man had neither brains nor heart."

"What has gotten into the men, any way!" exclaimed

Mrs. Wilson, frowning. "I think Mr. Brinsley was absolutely impertinent."

"Oh, he thinks he is at liberty to say what he likes. He is under a spell. Take my word for it, it won't last. He is a Catholic; she is a Protestant. They could never agree," asserted Horace Burt.

"I don't suppose she is anything, now. She *was* an Episcopalian. I suppose she has left the Church," replied Mrs. Brownell.

"I think not," said Mrs. Winthrop, who had hitherto kept silence. "Last evening, young Mrs. Elliot met Mrs. Thornton on the piazza. It seems Mrs. Elliot knows something about this science, and she approached Mrs. Thornton on the subject, and finally said to her that she would not give up her good old church and take to reading strange books for anything. And Mrs. Thornton's reply was: 'My dear, why *should* you take to reading strange books, and leave your church? If you want my advice I would say, stick to your church, read carefully and understandingly your Bible—put more literal and less figurative meaning into the teachings of your clergymen and Bible. You will then find you have all you need.' Now, that doesn't look to me as if she were pulling down religion. Mrs. Elliot said that, for a moment, she felt like resenting it. Then there came to her the sermon we all heard last Sunday—I mean those who went to church," said Mrs. Winthrop, laughing. "You remember, it was in regard to Christ's command to go out into the world and preach the gospel and heal the sick; and the clergyman said that ministers had been sent in accordance with this command, into all parts of the world. And then he said nothing about the command to heal the sick, except that the disciples and Paul had healed many people. And she said she began to think if Paul,

who had never seen Christ in the flesh, could do those things, why couldn't good people do them now? and then she told me she went to her room and took her Bible and read the promises of Christ; and that before she retired, it seemed to her she had gotten more out of her Bible to think about than ever before."

"Well, I would like to say this," said Mrs. Prescott, of Albany; "I don't think any of us really realize or appreciate all that is going on around us. I think Miss Stevens demonstrated that. I think you were all a little surprised when she admitted she was a student of this new philosophy; and she is very intellectual, you know."

"Oh, she is from Boston!" exclaimed Mrs. Delacey, "and you know we expect intellectual freaks from there."

"It's a Boston prerogative," said Mr. Sidley.

"Well," declared Mrs. Prescott, "I must relate a little experience of mine that I think will demonstrate that Boston does not have a monopoly of this new theory. I was talking to an enthusiast on this subject, one day, recently, and she made an assertion, that caused me to laugh incredulously; to which she said: 'Ask any of your friends who believe in this science and see if they do not tell you just what I do.' I replied that I did not have a single friend that believed in the absurdity. The next day, I had an engagement for luncheon at the home of a very dear friend—a charming woman with three lovely children. There were about twenty ladies present, all unusally bright. I knew them all intimately. I broached the subject of my conversation the day previous. I had not spoken a dozen words before I saw that our hostess was interested. I paused for an instant, and she took up the subject, and before I had an opportunity to express an opinion, I discovered that the majority at the table, if not believers, were at least interested in the study

of some branch of metaphysics. I don't think I ever was so much surprised in my life; and I can assure you that I heard some wonderful ideas advanced. I must say, some of them were very reasonable. But the one thing that struck me most forcibly was this: These ladies I had known intimately for years, and I don't recall one among them that was not a member of some church; and up to that time, I never had heard them discuss the Bible. I discovered they were all making a new study of it. And I came to the conclusion, before we finished luncheon, that they could not get very far away if they clung so tenaciously to the dear old Book. Every assertion they made, they reinforced with a quotation from it. When I expressed some surprise to my hostess that she was interested in this line of thought, she exclaimed: 'Dear me! I wouldn't know how to keep house and manage my husband and children but for my firm belief in this glorious Truth. I can get along without soothing syrups and pills, but not without this science of the mind.' So, as I said before, we don't know what is going on around us."

"I am sure you are quite right, Mrs. Prescott," said Mrs. Winthrop; "and I have heard of a good many cures quite as wonderful as the colonel's and little Ruth's. But I suppose our being right here in the house, we are more impressed by them. There are a number of churches, especially the Roman Catholic Church, where these cures are frequent. At Lourdes, and many other shrines, they are quite common. And that makes me think that the Puritans must have believed in Mental Science. Witchcraft was supposed to be the influence of the mind of one person over another, was it not? I never thought of that before, did you?"

"No," replied Mrs. Prescott, "I never did; but I can-

not see if the mind could have such an evil influence why it should not have also an influence for good."

"Well," said Mrs. de Lorme, "I don't know anything about these things; but since you have been talking I have been thinking about Cousin Betty. You all know that after that dreadful illness of hers, she began to mend rapidly, and the physician said she would be up in a few days. Well, her sister, Mrs. Lockwood, came to see her, and the first thing she said to Betty was: 'Why, how *awfully* you're looking! I don't think the doctor understands your case at all. You are as a pale as death. You have not a drop of good red blood in your body. What in the world are they giving you?' And she looked at the medicine and tasted it, and because it wasn't strong and black and bitter, she declared it wasn't any good; and she said: 'I declare! If you don't change your doctor you will never get well.' And Cousin Betty got worse, and they have had an awful time with her. I heard the doctor say that it was nothing but Mrs. Lockwood's talk; that Betty's faith had been shaken and all his work undone, and that he wished people could refrain from adverse suggestion. Now, what I have been thinking, is this: If suggestion could make her sick, why couldn't it make her well? This is not the first time I have heard just such remarks from physicians, and it seems to me they make a great admission in favor of mental therapeutics."

"Well, do you believe a case of small-pox or a broken limb could be cured by mental therapeutics?" asked Horace Burt.

"No, and as I understand it, Mrs. Thornton does not claim to be able to mend broken limbs. But she does claim that even in such cases mental therapeutics is a very valuble adjunct to the regular physician. I think she feels

that the time is coming when there will be no limit to the power of mental suggestion."

"I don't think that is so," said Mr. Sidley; "else the physicians would investigate it."

"Mrs. Thornton claims that a great many broad-minded physicians are studying it and adopting it as an auxiliary to their practice," replied Mrs. de Lorme.

But at this moment the conversation was broken up by a message for one of the ladies, stating that her cousin, Mrs. White, had died suddenly. She was well known to many of those present.

CHAPTER XX.

BETHESDA.

Mary was passing from object to object in the drawing-room of Bethesda, giving little womanly touches to various articles and chatting to Charles as she moved about. They were so companionable; it was a perfect unity of souls. Eight years of wedded life had only accentuated the fact that two lives could be perfectly blended. Mary was saying:

"Well, I really feel quite at home already."

"So do I. Do you know, the news of the cure of Colonel Eversoll and little Ruth has spread like wild-fire, and I think you will be overrun with patients."

"Oh, never mind! I can take care of them," cheerfully responded Mary.

"The doctor has told the colonel that he may have another attack at any time."

"Believe me, dear, God rules and reigns. The colonel is well and will remain well. Believing as he does, his cure is simply a miracle. I never saw such manifestations as in his and little Ruth's case. It has taught me one thing: that I can never expect too great results from the word spoken for Truth."

At this moment a servant entered and announced Mrs. Tremaine. Mary hurried forward to meet and welcome her. Again Mary's sympathetic handclasp thrilled her. Mary noticed her emotion, and it again instantly brought back that hazy, misty, intangible resemblance as of some one she had known. Mrs. Tremaine had laid her sunshade on the table. As she entered the room, Charles pushed forward a chair for her, and after the usual greeting, Mrs. Tremaine said to Mary:

"My dear Mrs. Thornton, I felt I could not wait to be ceremonious, and so have hastened to you early this morning."

"I am so glad you came. Tell me, how is Ruth?"

"Apparently well. She slept soundly all night; this morning she sat up and ate her breakfast. After that, she walked twice across the room holding our hands. Oh, Mrs. Thornton, I can't understand! It all seems too good to be true. Do you think she will remain well?"

"Most certainly. Don't give it a thought of fear. Think *health* and *strength* for her yourself. Remember, 'As a man thinketh so is he.' Therefore, do not think sickness."

Mary then turned the conversation to her home; and after chatting a few moments, suggested that Mrs. Tremaine go with her for a tour of inspection, laughingly telling Charles that he was not included in the invitation. While making the tour of inspection they went into the dining-room, and there Mary met one of the servants who wanted her advice about some matters in a different part of the house. So, Mary, giving Mrs. Tremaine a chair, excused herself and left her.

In the meantime, Harry had entered the house and had gone to the drawing-room where he found Charles,

who, on seeing him, greeted him cordially, welcoming him to their new home, exclaiming:

"Ah, Harry, old boy, is that you? I am glad to see you."

After a few casual remarks, Harry said: "I have come early as I wanted to have a little chat. I suppose, as we are old friends, I can talk plainly to you."

"Of course you can," replied Charles a little curiously. "Come, out with it. It must be something serious. You look as solemn as an undertaker."

"I believe you received the nomination for Congress for your party?" asked Harry, seriously.

"Yes, I did."

"You haven't given that up to come here to open a sanatorium?"

Charles, who had wondered what was up, now laughed as he replied:

"Lord bless your soul, no. I shall be in the thick of the fight before the end of next week."

"I am glad to hear that," said Harry.

"Am I to count on your support?" asked Charles.

"Well, I should say so!" enthusiastically responded Harry, giving him his hand. "From start to finish I am with you, personally, politically and financially. Consider me your backer."

"Royally said. Thanks, thanks!" said Charles, with genuine appreciation, as he grasped Harry's hand. "But what was it you wanted to say to me?"

"Well, I don't want to be impertinent; but—that is—well, what does *this* mean?" said Harry, waving his hands.

"To what do you refer?"

"To this house. I confess it gives me a feeling of uneasiness to see you mixed up in a thing of this sort. A politician and a sanatorium mixed! My dear boy, it

won't do. Better take your politics like I take my drinks —straight."

Charles broke into a long hearty laugh. Harry looked at him a moment, and then said seriously:

"Really, it's no laughing matter. Your enemies might get hold of this and make things lively for you. I imagine I see some of the headlines now: 'Plasters put on Political Corruption.' 'Emetics given to Boodlers by the New Candidate for Congress.' And the pictorial papers and magazines—why, just imagine it! They'll have you with a nightcap on, going round in your pajamas, with a bottle of Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup, or with a halo over your head, raising the dead."

While Harry was drawing his word-picture, Charles was shaking with laughter.

"Well, well! Upon my word, Hal, you ought to be an illustrator on some paper! I'll see if I can't find a vacancy for you;" and Charles roared again.

"Look here, Charlie, it isn't funny at all. It's serious. Ridicule in politics, of all things, is hardest to bear."

"There, there!" said Charles, consolingly, as he patted Harry on the shoulders. "Now, my dear boy, don't worry. The enterprise belongs entirely to my wife. It has been her dream for years to have a summer place of this sort. At last, she is able to realize it. I am in perfect sympathy with her; but I have nothing to do with it personally. She has named the place Bethesda, and I will find it a Bethesda for my tired soul as I come here each Saturday night to recuperate for each succeeding week of the campaign."

"I have known something of your wife's liberal ideas and methaphysical studies; but I had no idea she would carry them so far as this. You know, it is—ah—er—excuse me, Charlie; but—you are aware——" stammered Harry.

Charles stood looking at Harry as he stuttered and hesitated, trying to find the words he wanted to use, and evidently much embarrassed. It amused him very much to see this glib, quick-tongued Harry, who was never at loss for a word, now evidently floundering and fishing for a way to say a disagreeable thing pleasantly. And he said encouragingly to him:

"Oh, go on, go on, say what you please! Out with it!"

"Well, to come right out and stamp one's self as a Spiritualist, Christian Scientist, Theosophist, or anything of the sort, is out of the usual line, and, to tell you the truth, with you and your wife's social position, you can't afford it." Harry spoke earnestly, and seemed greatly concerned in the matter.

"Look here, Harry, I think you are a fit candidate for the 'Don't Worry Club.' *Don't worry* about our social position. My wife is simply a Christian; believing that Christ was the greatest teacher that has ever been given to the world. She thinks the art of healing has been lost from the Christian world and churches, just as the art of stained glass was lost from Art. She hopes to see the art or science of healing restored, and that is what she is working for."

"That's all very beautiful; but your wife has always been a society leader, and——"

"Ah! I see, Hal," laughed Charles, "you can't quite get away from the old idea that a woman should be a butterfly."

"No, no, no! not that. But society—you see, it has claims. You don't seem to understand, and——"

Charles, who had been in a laughing mood, and had really enjoyed the confusion and embarrassment of Harry, now became very serious as he answered earnestly:

"Yes, I do understand. Now, let me set your mind at

rest, once and for all. There is society and—society. My wife is not going to wear bloomers, nor blue spectacles, nor cut off her hair. She is just as fond of society, pretty dresses, dancing, music, flowers, as she ever was. These are things that make life glad, and in which she emphatically believes; but she also feels there are other things in life to which she desires to devote a part of her time. She has my consent, my approbation, my co-operation. And, if my political career depended on her giving up this work, I would give it up to-morrow. *But it will not.* She will remain here, sending me helpful thoughts as a sweet wife should, and no matter which way the election goes, all will be well with me. So don't fret, old man."

Looking in Charles's frank, courageous, honest face, Harry felt almost ashamed of his fears as he replied:

"Your wife is indeed a jewel. She is so serene, so sunny, so helpful, her very presence touches me like a benediction."

"I am glad you are fond of my wife. Ours has been, I believe, an exceptionally happy married life."

"I believe it. But tell me, how do you both manage to be so saintly?" smilingly asked Harry.

"Come, come, Hal! that almost sounds like sarcasm," replied Charles, smiling good-naturedly. "We are neither of us saints, especially myself—far from it. We are just two very human persons with all the temptations and weaknesses of our race. But there is one thing we are striving to do: We are both striving upward, and striving together, not separately. We try to think and work together—that's all."

"I believe all you say," sighed Harry, a discontented, unhappy look coming into his face, as he leaned against the window-casing and gazed dejectedly out at the morning sunshine that seemed to be bathing the whole world

in its glorious refulgence. He sighed again, as he continued, "Ah! You're a lucky dog, Charlie."

Charles had been watching Harry, and was quite surprised at the frown of discontent that overspread his face. "Happy Harry," his friends called him. Nothing ever seemed to trouble him. His life seemed to flow by like a song. Charles felt there was something out of the ordinary the matter; but he laughed lightly as he said in a rallying manner:

"Don't scowl like that, Hal. You'll dislodge your scalp. What's up now?"

"Oh, I'm in the worst trouble!"

Instantly Charles became very serious, and going up to Harry he laid his hand upon his shoulder, as he asked with much interest:

"Really? I'm sorry. Is it anything you can tell me? Perhaps I can help you. It's not serious, I hope."

"Yes, it is. I'm in love," replied Harry, disconsolately.

At this instant Mrs. Tremaine entered for her sunshade that she had left lying on the table. Charles and Harry were standing facing the window. Charles laughed at Harry's assertion and said:

"Oh, is that all! Well, why don't you marry?"

"Well, I like that! You, of all men, to say that to me."

"And why not I?"

"You know that I am a married man with a wife and child living."

"It is true; but for the moment I had forgotten."

A slight noise, and they both turned and saw Mrs. Tremaine. She stood looking at them as if frozen. Charles, glancing at Harry's face, saw his look of consternation, and partly guessing that he was *de trop,* said in an undertone:

"Ah, I see!" Then aloud, "I wish to see my wife a moment. Excuse me;" and he made his exit.

Harry and Mrs. Tremaine stood gazing at each other, she as if transfixed, he very much embarrassed.

"You were there—you heard?" he asked.

"All—all."

Harry felt as if he would sink before her gaze. He loved her so!—so truly, so honestly. How could he tell her—how make her understand! At this moment he could not have looked more abject if he had been guilty of the most awful crime; and it was with a husky, choking voice he said:

"You will let me explain—you will——"

"Is it true?" she interrupted.

"No—Yes—that is——"

She had stood like a statue, apparently in hopes that there was a mistake; but at his halting, hesitating reply, her eyes now began to flash ominously as she said:

"Then it is true."

"My dear Mrs. Tremaine, let me explain——"

"I want no explanation. I want *yes* or *no*. Is it true?" she demanded with suppressed excitement.

"Yes, it is true; but——"

Instantly she exclaimed in a fury: "And you, you, *you* dared to come to me! *You,* a married man, to pursue me with your attentions—to—— Oh, it is too much!"

He was dumb with astonishment as he listened to her outburst of anger and honest indignation. In her temper and excitement, she had shown more of her real regard for him than he, in his wildest moment, had dared to hope for. And now, he feared she was lost to him forever. With a mighty effort, he said eagerly but incoherently:

"I beseech you, listen to me! It is true I am a married

man, but I never loved my wife. It was a matter of money. I detested her, I detest her now. I—that is—I never lived with her—I——"

He stopped short at the look that swept into her face. Amazement, disgust, and contempt were all mingled there, as she said:

"Never lived with her—and you have a child! There! That will do, Mr. Burbank. No, no, no!" she exclaimed as he protesting, tried to explain. "Not another word. Do not add falsehood to your other sins. I will not listen. I could not marry you. I would not marry you; but I did want to respect you!" she exclaimed, as, catching up her sunshade she turned toward the door. Harry started toward her, and said imploringly:

"Mrs. Tremaine, for God's sake, listen! I swear the child——"

She put up her hands to silence him, as she moved toward the door, he said frantically:

"Oh, you do not understand!"

She had reached the door. She turned like a flash and exclaimed in a frenzy:

"Yes, I *do* understand. You thought I was alone, unprotected. You thought you could insult me. You thought——"

He sprang toward her with a beseeching look; but it was of no use. She was in a perfect whirlwind of passion and would listen to nothing.

"No, no! I will hear no more. There is no apology you can make, no falsehood you could speak, that would excuse you. I never want to see your face again—never—never! Don't you dare to follow me, don't you ever dare to speak to me again!" were her parting words as she fled from the room and the house.

Safely within her own room, she threw herself on a divan, and now that she was alone, all her haughty spirit failed her and she was only a weak woman, crushed under the horror of the words that were ringing in her ears. Her whole frame shook, and the hot blinding tears fell from her eyes like rain. "Oh, I loved him so, I loved him so!" she moaned. Her dream was rudely broken; her illusion of happiness destroyed. "Ah, God! is there no truth, no mercy, no honesty in man?"

After a while she became calmer; and she allowed her thoughts to travel back over the past few days. The meeting with Mary, the cure of Ruth, the awful scene of the morning with Sidney—then this cruel blow. She had known she could never be Harry's wife; but to her lonely heart the knowledge of his love had come like balm. The fact that he loved her and had asked her to be his wife, without ever asking her a question, without even knowing who she was, had made him almost a god in her sight. She thought this man that could let love dominate him, instead of the world, must be near the angels. And now, *now* to find that he was only of common clay, a thing to be despised, a creature to be abhorred! and to think she had loved this man! Her face flushed, now, as she remembered how her heart had leaped up as he whispered, "I love you." She was in despair. The blow had been so sudden. She felt weak and helpless. Thus, for a while, she sat inactive. Then she thought: "I cannot remain here and meet either of those men again." She remembered what Mrs. Thornton had said about Ruth: that she was well and would remain well. She must go away at once.

She arose and took up the morning paper, and found that a Cunard steamer would sail for Europe at six o'clock that day. It was now near noon. If she could get ready

in time for the three o'clock train, she could reach New York in time to sail on that vessel. She wrote a telegram for accommodations, called a servant, and sent it at once. Then, assisting the maid in packing, they were soon ready for their journey. But her heart was wrung at Ruth's pleading to see her dear Sir Knight and Gertrude before leaving.

No one knew Mrs. Tremaine was going until the last moment. Then, the only reason she gave was that she had been suddenly summoned to the city. She had written only one letter, and that was to Mary, apologizing for her sudden departure and promising an explanation later.

CHAPTER XXI.

PUZZLING QUESTIONS OF CARL AND GERTRUDE.

When Mrs. Tremaine had fled from the room where Harry was, he stood irresolute for a moment, then exclaimed to himself:

"Was ever anything more unfortunate? What a perfect tempest! I will follow her, I will force her to listen to me."

He started as if to carry out his resolve; then, as her words came back to him, "You thought I was alone—unprotected," he hesitated as he reflected:

"No; she would think I forced myself on her because she is alone. No, I cannot do that. What *shall* I do? She has gone from me with contempt and bitterness in her heart. How can I see her—how make her understand the miserable situation in which I am placed?"

He felt the very scorching of her honest eyes, and he remembered the scorn that curved her lip and dilated her nostrils when she thought he had lied to her. He had been in doubt before, as to whether he was able to touch her heart; but she had betrayed herself. And now, he felt he never could give her up; but he realized he must move with care. He always had shown her the most profound respect. He would not force himself upon her, but see

her he must. But how? A sudden thought seemed to strike him:

"I have it! I will make a clean breast of the whole affair to Mrs. Thornton. She can and will help me out."

He went at once to find her, and learned that she had gone down to the cottages to assist in receiving some of the people that were to occupy them, and that she would not return until luncheon. There was nothing for him to do but wait to see her.

He went back to the drawing-room where he found Charles, who had seen Mrs. Tremaine leave, and at once returned to look for Harry who said, in answer to Charles's smiles and knowing looks:

"Yes, that is the woman I love. But we will not discuss her at present. When she entered, we were speaking of my wife."

"Yes. Do you ever hear from her?"

"Indirectly, yes. Every six months a letter is exchanged in the bank by her lawyer and mine, merely stating the fact that we are each alive. About a year after our marriage, a letter came, saying that owing to the death of a relative she no longer needed the money deposited for her. Nevertheless, I ordered the deposit continued; but I learned yesterday through my lawyer, that the whole amount remains untouched."

"It was a strange marriage—in fact, no marriage at all."

"Of course it wasn't; and I was a cad ever to have bound myself in that way. All I thought of at the time was Uncle Ralph's money, when I ought to have had nerve enough to have gone to work and earned my own living. I suppose I deserve what I've got. At any rate, I would give all I possess, now, to be free. Come, Charlie, you are a lawyer; advise me. Can't I obtain a divorce?"

"I am a lawyer, yes. But I won't give you advice," smilingly asserted Charles. "We are too near friends for that. I would be partial.—Dr. Malridge and Colonel Eversoll are coming to luncheon; also the Brandts, Miss Stevens, Donald, and Bennie. We will have a merry party at our dedicatory luncheon, and you can just tackle the colonel and get his opinion; and if he gives you any hope, I'll promise to back it up by my superior judgment."

"There!" exclaimed Harry; "talk of the dev—I mean of the colonel—and he appears. There he is, hobbling along without crutch or cane, even declining the assistance of grinning Billy. Well, it does me good to see the dear old fellow on his pins once more. Talk about a miracle! If that isn't a miracle I'd like to know what is?"

Charles said nothing, and they stood watching the colonel who had descended unaided from the buggy, and was walking unassisted to the house. Harry turned and caught Charles by the hand, exclaiming with much feeling:

"By George! Charlie, you must forgive me for my remarks regarding your wife's pursuits if through her such results can be brought about. I feel as if I ought to hide my face in shame."

When the colonel entered, Harry rushed forward, hastily placing a large, easy chair for him.

"Here, here! what are you doing? I don't want to sit down. Just give me a chance to prance around a little and show you how smart I am," said the colonel, disdaining the chair. He had a somewhat larger shoe on his lame foot and walked with a slight limp only, and declared positively that he had no pain.

After a little friendly chat, Charles said:

"We were talking about you when you appeared. In

short, Harry's in trouble and wants your assistance. He is in love."

"Indeed? Well, that's a good thing. Who is the lady?"

"With the loveliest woman in the world," declared Harry, looking at the colonel who slowly shook his head, and Harry added: "Oh, you'll say so when you know who she is."

"You forget the colonel and I are married, and that from our standpoint, we each have the loveliest woman in the world," laughed Charles.

"Oh, I forgot!" replied Harry. "I'll modify it and say one of the loveliest."

"That's better," said the colonel, with a sigh. "Ah! boys, wait a few years; then you'll know how to say *loveliest* and *best*. My wife, *my* wife! How often I say these words. Sometimes, when we are in a crowd, where, to me, she is the loveliest of all women, I say to myself: '*My wife*—the mother of my boys!' and a thrill vibrates through every fiber of my frame exquisite in its sweetness and pain."

"Pain? how is that?" asked Harry.

"Yes, pain. For sometimes a thought comes to me of death; and it's unendurable. Death! Does it end all? Hell would be sweet to me if shared with *her;* and heaven would be hell without her. The bitterest moment of my life was once when I thought she was going to die and go I knew not where. What anguish I suffered! I would have given words to believe it was only a temporary parting."

The colonel turned away and walked to the extreme end of the room; then, tossing his hands in the air as if to chase away the thoughts that had rushed to his brain, he returned to where Charles and Harry were, and said in his customary breezy manner:

"But come; you wanted my advice and I stand here moralizing."

"It is difficult to ask your advice after hearing you express such sentiment."

"How so? Come, let us have it. I promise to confine myself to business."

"My dear colonel, you have not forgotten that Harry is a married man?" queried Charles.

"No, no; I have not forgotten it, although I have never talked about it to you. It has— but come close and I'll tell you a secret," said the colonel mysteriously, coming over and standing between the two. "On the quiet, mind—just between us three—I have a Conscience,"—with the air of a man that had just thrown a bomb.

"No, impossible!" exclaimed Harry and Charles, derisively.

"Yes. Sad isn't it? But 'tis true,"—with mock solemnity, replied the colonel.

"Oh, Charles, what a discovery! Let me lean on your shoulder and weep. Columbus isn't in it," said Harry.

"I am as much affected by the discovery as you," returned Charles. "From this time on, we are not unknown. Our names will go ringing down the corridors of time. From this time on, the orthodox world is at our feet. We have succeeded where they have so often explored in vain."

"Yes, and—and—a waiting posterity and all that sort of thing. Excuse my emotion, I am so overcome!" exclaimed Harry, drawing out his handkerchief, and applying it to his eyes.

The colonel stood watching them, with a quizzical look on his face. Then followed a shout of laughter from these two fellows of whom he was so fond.

"Oh, hang it all! Colonel, what has your conscience to

do with my getting a divorce?—and that is just what I want."

"Well, the thing I call my conscience has troubled me a good many times when I have remembered what a very large finger I had in that matrimonial pie."

"The whole affair was too bad. Harry repents now," said Charles.

"How are you going to get a divorce?" asked the colonel.

"I don't know," replied Harry. "That is why I came to you."

"My dear boy, my conscience will not permit——"

He got no further in his remark. Charles and Harry fell into each other's arms in a state of collapse, and Harry exclaimed despairingly:

"That conscience again. Heavens! how the thing has grown."

"Harry, my boy, I fear we have an elephant on our hands. I don't think I can stand it any longer. Sorry to leave you in the lurch, but I have some matters to attend to and will join you later," laughed Charles, as he quitted the room.

"Hal, old fellow, in all seriousness, I'm sorry for you," declared the colonel.

"Well, then, in all seriousness, I am absolutely miserable in spite of our fooling. I never felt my bonds until recently. In fact, I had almost forgotten that they existed. But lately, I have been forced to remember them. And I ask you now, for the love of heaven, to help me out of this if you can. I *must* be free."

"You know nothing of the whereabouts of your wife?"

"Nothing, absolutely nothing. Now, what can be done?"

"My dear fellow, according to our laws, there must be an offense committed on one side or the other. Now, such is not the case in this affair."

"Then, what in the deuce is to be done? I simply *must* have the divorce," exclaimed Harry, desperately.

"If I had the making of the laws, I would set you both free merely for the asking; but I have not the making of the laws, therefore, I fear there is no help for you. Write to your wife. She may feel she has been badly treated, and by getting the divorce, save you the trouble."

They were here interrupted by the entrance of the children and Dr. Malridge.

"Ah, here is Dr. Malridge, and here is our girlie-girlie," exclaimed the colonel, kissing Gertrude, who had thrown herself into his arms.

"I think I am a little early," said the doctor, seating himself in an easy chair. "But I came early for a little visit. How good it is to find a place where no ceremony is needed. I wonder where the general is?"

"I think he will be along directly," replied the colonel, gaily. "I am like you; it seems like home here already—just to see the old faces."

"I see you are able to walk," said the doctor.

"Yes, thank goodness."

"You do not fear a relapse?"

"Not I. I believe I am cured," laconically replied the colonel.

"How do you account for it?" queried Dr. Malridge.

"I don't account for it. I know that for the first time in two years, I have eaten a square meal in comfort and am free from pain. That is enough for me, at present."

"Here at the Springs the people are insane over what they are pleased to term your and the child's miraculous cures," said the doctor.

"Well, it's a healthy insanity, isn't it?" humorously questioned the colonel.

"But suppose you should relapse?" persisted the doctor.

"Well, suppose I should. People have been sick, got well, and got sick again. There is nothing remarkable about it that I know of. Even the people you claim Christ cured, got sick and died some time—or I suppose they did, as I never heard of any of them being around anywhere," retorted the colonel.

"Well, I hope you will remain well; but I fully expect to see you back in your *Pull-man* car, same as ever."

Gertrude and Carl had been playing about the room. They were now standing by the table, trying to work out a puzzle in blocks. She had a doll in her arms. She noticed the doctor's remark, and looking up, said confidently:

"He will not be sick again."

"Why will he not?" asked Dr. Malridge, very much surprised at her assertion.

Gertrude looked up, apparently astonished that a big man like Dr. Malridge should not know and replied:

"Because—this was your lame foot, wasn't it?" pointing to the colonel's lame foot.

"Yes," replied the colonel.

"Well, God was not in that foot; but He is in it now; and it is a good foot just like the other foot."

"How can a man be in my foot?" asked the colonel.

Gertrude raised her eyes and looked at him: "I didn't say a *man.*"

"You said *he.*"

For an instant she hesitated, then asked:

"Is the sun a man? I heard you call the sun *he,* yesterday. I asked mamma about it, and she said that the sun is called *he;* but it is Spirit or principle—just as God is Spirit or principle; that the sun is warm and shines into us and makes us warm, just as God is Spirit and shines into us and makes us well. Don't you see? It's very

easy"—giving a little finishing touch to the ribbon-sash she was tying about the waist of her doll. Then, as if a new thought had struck her, she went on: "I went to the closet a little while ago, to get my dollies. It was so dark I couldn't see. The light was not good, or a God-light," here she looked up and said impressively: "You know, mamma says Good and God mean the same thing; that everything that is Good is God; and that everything that is God is Good. Don't you see? Well, I had to light the gas to let the Good or God-light into the closet before I could find my dollies. That's just the way it was with you. The Good Light was not in your foot. I asked God to please let it in and make your foot a good foot; and you are well. Oh, you know God does *everything* for us, if we only ask Him in the right way," concluded Gertrude, with a little contented sigh, as she stood her dolly upon the table and straightened its dress.

They had all been listening to her. The colonel rubbed the top of his head, drew a long breath, and blurted out:

"Well, I'll be blowed!"

"Isn't it funny!" laughed Gertrude, turning round and looking at the colonel. "Did you think God was a man, sitting up on the edge of a cloud, looking down at you to scare you? Oh, Colonel! Mamma says even if I *am* little I must cultivate my mind. I think, you had better cultivate *your* mind. You know, you can take a little at a time, and then it won't hurt you."

Carl called Gertrude to help him with his puzzle. The colonel looked limp. Harry laughed and said:

"I have read, somewhere, of wisdom coming from the mouths of babes and sucklings—eh, Colonel?"

"I think I will have to go out into the air in order to breathe," laughed the colonel. "I feel quite done up. Who ever heard of a child talking like that?"

"I remember, once," said Harry, "to have heard you say in a lecture that children should be taught to think. Gertrude has been taught to think; that's all."

"Yes; but this child thinks too much," replied the colonel.

"What monstrous stuff to teach a child!" exclaimed Dr. Malridge, in grave concern, as he began pacing the floor.

"Oh, I don't know. It's just about as sensible as what *you* teach them," replied the colonel, bristling up. He was loathe to attack a child, but there was always a religious chip on his shoulder when the doctor was around.

The doctor stopped in his walk, and laying his hand on Gertrude's head, asked:

"What Sunday-school have you gone to?"

"Oh, I never went to Sunday-school!"

"How unfortunate!" sighed the good man as he turned away.

"What great luck, I should say!" exclaimed the colonel, ironically. "Sunday-school, indeed! Most people have a perfectly quiet conscience in regard to their children if they know they have been regularly bathed, spanked, and sent to Sunday-school."

"Colonel, you are actually profane."

The colonel made a gesture of impatience and retorted: "Well, I can assure you it makes me feel profane when I see how the minds of children are tampered with. And I emphatically protest against Sam Jonesing, a boy of good breeding and bias."

"Ah!" sighed the doctor, "say what you will; but in these days, when the devil is turned loose, there is no place so safe for a boy as the Sunday-school."

When Dr. Malridge spoke of the devil, both Carl and Gertrude looked up. Gertrude came over and stood look-

ing at the doctor. Colonel Eversoll laughed at the doctor's remark, and said:

"I read a very good thing the other day. An old minister had three grandsons visiting him from the city. He had sounded them on their various studies, and found them well advanced. So, he thought he would like to know how they were fortified religiously. He took a Catechism and asked the eldest boy: 'Ralph Waldo, what is the chief end of man?' 'The head,' was the prompt reply. The answer in the Catechism was: 'To get to Heaven and glorify God.' The old man was a little surprised, but he thought he wouldn't be discouraged, and he asked the second boy: 'Herbert Spencer, how did God create man?' 'By evolution from protoplasm. The protoplasm became an amœba, and the amœba became, in long ages, an amphibian, and the amphibian became a vertebrate, and the highest vertebrates are mammals, and we are the highest mammals.' You see, the boys in these days breathe physiology and biology, and immediately think in a physiological manner. It took the old man's breath away, and with a gasp, he asked the youngest boy: 'Robert I., how did God create the angels?' 'I don't know. There is nothing about that in my biology. I suppose they must come from some branch of the anthropoid ape.' The old man shut up the book and excused himself and went out to think. I guess he's thinking yet," said the colonel, with a comical grin on his face. "But I'll be blest if I wouldn't rather have the ideas of those boys than the ideas of my boyhood."

"You are a rank atheist, Colonel. You're worse than an agnostic," said Dr. Malridge.

"So I am an atheist, am I?" cried the colonel, warmly, "simply because I object to children having their brains tinkered with, and manipulated by ignorance. If you have a fine watch with perfect mechanism, do you send it to a

blacksmith or to a common jeweler to have it repaired? By no means. You send it to an expert—to a Tiffany; but your child, whose brain is a thousand times more delicate in its mechanism, you send to a blatherskite Sunday-school teacher to be tinkered with, one that doesn't know enough to teach even what you yourself believe. Go to! it disgusts me just to think about it!" exclaimed he, warmly, waving his hand as if there was no more to be said on the subject, and that it was folly to discuss it further.

At this moment, Gertrude, who was leaning against the doctor, who had his arms around her, said:

"Mamma says you are such a good man; that you have —oh! such a beautiful church, that you do a great deal of good. What do you do there? Do the sick people go there to be healed, as they go down to Mabelthorp and here at our new home?"

"Yes, my child," said the doctor, gently stroking her golden hair. "Every Sunday they go there to drink of the River that gives to them life everlasting."

"On Sundays? Well, but what do you do the rest of the week with your beautiful church?"

"Keep it shut up and take good care of it, and keep it to worship God in," said the doctor, reverently.

"I should think you would want to keep it open all the time," said Gertrude, "and let the people drink of the water of life every day."

There was a chuckle of enjoyment from the colonel at this remark.

The doctor put his hand tenderly under Gertrude's chin, and lifting her face up, he looked into the beautiful blue eyes, and asked:

"My dear, do you and your mamma heal the people every day?"

"Oh! *we* do not heal any one," said Gertrude, stepping back, with a look of surprise coming into her face. "We only speak the Word of Truth. God that is within you, and in every one, does the healing. I speak the Word every day to the dogs and to my kittens and to my dollies and to the birds and butterflies and rabbits and e-v-e-r-y one! And He makes them well and happy. Don't you see?"

"Where did you learn this?"

"Oh, I never learned it. I always knew it."

"Gertrude thinks that's prayer," chimed in Carl. "Now, is it? Didn't you say, in Sunday-school, that people ought to kneel down and pray in secret, or go into a closet and pray?"

"Yes," replied the doctor.

"Now, Gertrude, I told you so," said Carl.

"Is that the way *you* pray?" asked Gertrude of the doctor.

"Yes, my dear."

"My!" said Gertrude, surveying the long legs of the doctor. "I should think that would be very uncomfortable—to double up your legs like that all the time."

"How do *you* pray?" asked the doctor.

"Oh, many ways," said Gertrude, with animation. "Sometimes I get in my swing or I curl up on the sofa, where I am real comfortable, and I think and think of the beautiful world; and I wish everybody could have a beautiful home and beautiful flowers, and I just say, 'Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful—Love, love, love—Truth, truth, truth—Health, health, health—Hope, hope, hope—Trust, trust, trust,—and oh, *so* many nice little words like that. I say them until I feel little quivers all around me and all up and down my back; and I know the air is full of little prayers; and I know God understands. Then I go off to

sleep, and forget all about it, and when I wake up I feel so good and happy, and I know God will look after things. I think that's a great deal nicer than doubling up your legs in a dark closet. Oh, it's awful nice! You ought to just try it some time."

There was a smothered laugh in the direction of the colonel and Harry; also a suspicious sound from the reception-room, the door of which was ajar. The doctor was looking at Gertrude as if he did not exactly know what reply to make, when Carl said:

"And she thinks this is prayer! That's the way she cured Bunny yesterday. Didn't you?"

"Of course I did. I just wrapped him up in a nice little shawl, and laid him on the sofa, and I kept saying, 'Health, health, health.' Then I said, 'Please, God, will you just attend to Bunny?' And I went to sleep until Bunny woke me up with his little cold nose, and he was well. When Carl told me, the other day, what you said about prayer, I asked Mamma about it; and she said the secret closet was the heart; so, when we pray in secret we pray in our heart. Mamma said if any one wanted to go in a closet or pray on their knees it's all right if they feel that way. Every one must do his own way. She says she can pray better when she is going about in all places. Colonel Eversoll prays just the same way I do."

"Oh, he never prays," said Dr. Malridge.

"Oh, but he does! I heard him make, oh, the most beautifullest prayer yesterday; didn't I, Colonel?"

For once, and only once, perhaps the colonel regretted that he was compelled to say:

"Well, I guess I didn't pray."

Gertrude stood looking first at the doctor, then at the colonel. At last she asked:

"What *is* prayer? Isn't it something you desire very

much—something good that you wish for way down from the bottom of your heart?"

"Yes, my child," replied the doctor.

"Well, yesterday I heard the colonel say: 'I wish from the bottom of my soul, I could make every man, woman, and child happy on this earth.' Now, if that isn't prayer, what is it?"

The colonel laughed heartily as he said: "Dear me! I wonder if I've been a praying man all my life and didn't know it. Haven't you a hymn which says something about prayer being the soul's sincere desire?"

"I think we have," replied the doctor, "but I don't think it applies to you."

Gertrude didn't seem to see anything to laugh about, and stood leaning against the chair with a thoughtful look in her face. Harry came over, and seating himself in the chair, took her hand and asked:

"What are you thinking about now, little one?"

"Oh, the devil."

Every one turned and looked at her for a minute. The way she said it certainly sounded rather queer, for her, and there was an audible smile about to break forth; but evidently, Carl understood it, for he chimed in with:

"My Sunday-school teacher said there was a devil, and now Dr. Malridge says there is a devil. Gertrude says there isn't a devil."

"What did your *nice* Sunday-school teacher tell you that for?" satirically questioned the colonel, with a malicious twinkle in his eyes.

"Oh, Freddie Wittin went to sleep in Sunday-school, and he had his mouth open, and I killed two flies and dropped them in his mouth to wake him up; and he pretty near swallowed them, and he cried like anything. And the teacher told me I was a bad boy, and asked me if I

wasn't afraid the devil would get me. And I told him I didn't know what the devil was like; and he said the devil was just like God, only he was ugly, and had horns and a tail, and hoofs on his feet like my pony, and that he would carry off bad little boys. And Gertrude says it isn't so."

"Well, I'm only a little girl, but I know better than that."

"How *do* you know?" questioned Carl.

"Well, God made everything, and if there was a devil, God would have to make him. Would you make a lot of nice little boys and girls and then make an ugly old devil to come and carry them off? Would you be as mean as that, Carl?"

"Of course I wouldn't."

"Then be sure God wouldn't do it."

"By George! she's a philosopher," laughingly exclaimed the colonel to Harry.

"But Dr. Malridge said, a little while ago, that the devil was turned loose—didn't you, Doctor?" persisted Carl.

"Yes," replied the doctor.

Gertrude had been taught that she could talk and ask questions, but that she must not dispute any person's word. So she said nothing; and Carl thought she was vanquished. There was a little triumphant tone in his voice, as he said:

"Aha, Gertrude! You see? I guess there *is* a devil, after all. Now what have you got to say to that? Don't you believe it *now?*"

"No, I *don't,*" said Gertrude, emphatically.

"Why?" asked Dr. Malridge.

"Don't you think God made everything?" asked Gertrude.

"Yes," replied the doctor.

"And don't you think God is everywhere?"

"Yes," again replied the doctor.

"Well, if God is everywhere, in every little tiny place, and in everything, where is there a place for the devil to stay?"

A shout from Harry and the colonel, and an explosion from the reception-room, broke up the discussion with the colonel's asking:

"My dear friend, how do you feel now?"

"Oh, it's impossible to talk to children on such matters," said the doctor, with a tinge of annoyance in his voice.

"Just so; rather puzzling, I admit. But here come our friends. I'll wager, for once, you are glad of an interruption," laughed the colonel, and he turned to the new arrivals just in time to hear Miss Brandt say:

"Oh, we entered the reception-room just as Gertrude was diagnosing the colonel's foot; and we could not refrain from becoming eavesdroppers."

"And we feel we have been amply repaid for the breach of good breeding," said Miss Stevens.

"Therefore, we have no apology to make," added Donald.

"Isn't that little Gertrude a corker? By Jove! She is a wonder, don't you know?" said Bennie, with great animation.

"As they say down south, I was 'powerful glad' that I was not in Dr. Malridge's shoes. I should certainly have beaten a retreat. He is a very brave man," said Dick, as he ensconced himself in the corner of a luxurious divan, in his usually languid manner.

At this moment, Mary and Charles entered, and very soon luncheon was announced; the colonel declaring his

thankfulness at being able to repair the waste tissue after this attack on their gray matter.

All present were old friends, and Mirth and Jollity were the little gods that presided over that festal hour; and nothing of a serious turn was discussed. The only silent one was Harry. He could hardly restrain his impatience until luncheon was finished. He was so preoccupied, they dubbed him "The Absent-Minded Beggar."

After luncheon, Mary went to the library with Harry. The rest of the party returned to the drawing-room. The conversation turned on the children. Nothing had been said about them during luncheon, as both were present.

"Gertrude is not a common child," said Miss Stevens. "She is phenomenal in her knowledge and way of thinking."

"She is certainly a very unnatural child," said Dr. Malridge.

"You say she is unnatural," said General Starkweather. "I think I have seen the time when I would have said the same thing; but if you could hear the talk of these children, at times, as I have done, I think you would not only be amused, but your mind would be disabused of the idea of her being unnatural. She does not possess greater, possibly not so great, knowledge as he; but it is of a different kind. It is the mind differently directed and trained; that is all. She has been taught life and it's influences, its every day aspects. Its practical side has been shown to her. It has been done by her parents who allow no one to instruct her but themselves. It has been principally by illustration, and made as attractive as possible. There is not a thing that happens in her play with her pets, there is not a thing she sees in nature that has not its story to tell. It's all very simple; but I admit it is unusual, and that is why you think it unnatural.

"Now, it is different with Carl. He has just as great a fund of information as she; but it is of a different kind. His mind is filled with fairy-stories, visionary, impossible things. Until I watched these children and heard them talk, I never realized what an amount of stuff nearly all children were allowed to learn—things that in the course of time they would be compelled to unlearn. At times, when they are together, it is like two persons each speaking a different language. When Carl begins to tell all his stories of The Arabian Nights, and about Jack the Giant-Killer, The Seven-Leagued Boots, Jack and the Beanstalk, Red-riding Hood and the Wolf, Brer Rabbit, and all the rest of the impossible and nonsensical stuff, Gertrude is mute. She does not understand it.

"With him, his intellectual and mind surroundings have been bad. If you see fit to study the wonderful drawing power of the mind, and apply it to Carl, you will then understand why he got the name of *bad*. The child was almost motherless. He was mischievous, and other people's bad thoughts were continually operating on his life. He was an unhappy little fellow, and for that reason he attracted bad thoughts that, in time, would have influenced his whole life. He had learned to hate from not being properly treated. He is naturally warm-hearted and lovable. The good is there, else he would not be so easily controlled.

"He has been with us about three days; but it is marvelous what he has picked up already. He is inquisitive and 'brainy'; and small as he is, he is very skeptical and doubting; and his little lip can curl, and he can show a world of cynicism in his voice; or, he can maintain a stoical silence that is eloquent.

"Some of the things she says seem vague to him, but his heart has been stirred. There is already that dawning

of something within him; his mind is reaching out, and, little by little, he will gradually grow in another direction.

"Now Gertrude is simply a fairy-like little girl, also a 'brainy' child; but her training has made her different. Then, take the matter of birth. There again she has had great advantages. Her parents are perfectly congenial. With them it is not only a union of hearts, but a union of pursuits and interests. There never has been the slightest discord between them. They are both optimistic, living the optimistic life and creating the optimistic atmosphere. Gertrude was born with her face aglow. She is a beautiful child-soul for this reason: She has a wonderful amount of self-control. I have never heard her cry a half dozen times in my life. Why, when Gertrude cries, we all look upon it as a real calamity; and it surprises me, now, when I look back, to think how little I thought of the tears of childhood. I thought of them then merely as summer showers. She is never put off just because she is a child. Her parents are never too busy to answer her questions; if not at the moment, a note is made of them and she is answered later. They treat her as a companion and friend and she is encouraged to do her own thinking. They take pains to suggest things that develop this faculty. She advances some droll ideas, at times, as all children do; but they are never laughed at, but are weighed and considered so that she already begins to feel as if her opinions were of some consequence.

"While not a sensitive-plant, she has very delicate tastes. She loves play, is a romp, and has a keen sense of the ridiculous, and enjoys a good laugh. But with all this, there is, at times, a desperate earnestness in her, for one so young. She has keen insight and a good deal of discriminating power. She is made to know the difference between

truth and fiction. She has implicit confidence in her parents and in their judgment. And, as I said to begin with, it is chiefly a matter of environment and education."

While the general had been talking, some street musicians had been playing in front of the house; the children had given them some money and were dancing on the piazza. The musicians were now gone, and the children had resumed their play. Suddenly Gertrude's laugh rang out as only she could laugh.

"Do hear that child laugh," said the colonel. "Was there ever music sweeter than that?"

"I would give anything to hear what they are talking about," said Edith.

"You can hear," said the general, "if you stand near the window."

In a moment there was a listening group inside. They evidently had been saying something about thought; for Gertrude said:

"I held thoughts for you to come back, the other night, when your papa sent for you, so we could finish the house, you know. It was so beautiful that I wanted to finish it—and you did come back."

"Well," said Carl, "I was coming anyway."

"Oh, you might not!"

"Yes, I was; for you remember your mamma said that papa said I could come back, and that papa was a gentleman and would keep his word. So you see, I was sure to come back anyway, without the thoughts," said the young skeptic.

"Well, I held them just the same," stoutly replied Gertrude.

"'Thoughts ain't things, anyway. You're crazy. Any-

thing to be a *thing,* must be something you can look—look at, or—or feel; and you can't feel or see a thought."

"Oh, Carl Burton, what a story! Can't you feel your thoughts coming right up inside of you? *I* can."

"Well—well, suppose you *can* feel them, you can't get hold of them, as you say, and hold them like this," said Carl, opening and shutting his hand. "That's silly."

"Well, perhaps you can't hold them in your hand like that," making the same motion with her hand, "but you know you have them. They're all around you and all over you."

At this moment, the wind brought the strong scent from honeysuckles that were growing near. Gertrude noticed it and said:

"There! don't you smell the perfume of the flowers? It isn't only on your face where your nose is. It's all over you. If you had a nose in your feet you would smell the perfume on the floor. Now, don't you understand, Carl? You have *got* to believe a few things you can't catch hold of."

There was a suppressed chuckle inside the window.

"Well, I don't believe anything I can't see," said the rising agnostic.

Another chuckle from Colonel Eversoll.

"Oh, what a fib! You do believe things you can't see."

"No, I don't," said Carl, with emphasis.

"I can prove it," declared Gertrude.

"Well, I'd like to see you do it. You can't, you know you can't."

"Do the flowers grow and bloom?"

"Yes."

"Well, did you ever *see* a flower grow? It does grow. I have watched and watched; but you can't see it. The wind blows, but you can't see it. There!"

For a minute, Carl looked doubtful as she spoke of the flowers; but hope sprang up when she spoke of the wind, and he said triumphantly:

"Yes, I can, look in the trees and see it."

"No, you can't. You only see the leaves move and they speak and tell you that it blows. You feel it and your body tells you that it blows."

At this moment, Carl whacked his finger with a little hammer he was playing with. He dropped the hammer, stuck his finger in his mouth to relieve the pain as he exclaimed:

"That hurts!"

"What hurts?"

"The pain."

"How do you know you have it? You can't see it. Are you trying to taste it?"

Then both children laughed; and there was silence for a moment. Gertrude seemed to be thinking. Suddenly she said:

"But, Carl, everything is thought, sure enough. There are two kinds of thoughts—God's thought and people's thought."

"What do you mean—everything in the whole world?" asked Carl, making a grand sweep with his arms.

"Yes, everything—every *single* thing."

"How can you prove it? I don't believe you can."

"Well, now; first, God thought a world and trees and flowers and animals and fish, and then people."

"Gertrude Thornton, you're—you're crazy. You beat the band for saying crazy things. You're a bluffer, you know you are. You don't know what you're talking about."

"Yes, I do. Now, you know our blocks here, and this

floor and all the chairs and tables in the house were all trees once, weren't they?"

"Well, suppose they were? What has that got to do with it?"

"Well, the trees were God's thoughts and the other things were man's thoughts."

"I don't see how."

"Why, this way: Here are our blocks. *Now,* they are only blocks; but if some one doesn't *think* a temple, they remain blocks. If you hadn't *thought* a little wagon, yesterday, and made it, it would still be just a piece of wood. So the wagon is Carl's thought. See, Mr. Carl?"

Just then Malcolm came round the house with a basket of cherries. Gertrude exclaimed:

"Oh, Carl! is your appetite hungry for cherries?" And they pounced upon Malcolm who allowed them to help themselves. They sat down and began eating them.

"See," said Gertrude laughing; "we are eating God's thoughts and Malcolm's thoughts. God thought the cherries; Malcolm's thought picked them and brought them to us."

Carl laughed and said: "Well, I like God's thought, anyway."

Then they both laughed, and got into a tussle, pelting each other with cherries, and running and racing about playing tag.

The little group inside the window drew a long breath and laughed, and Edith said:

"She is the queerest child I ever saw."

"Now that is what I object to," said Dr. Malridge. "Now, see her running and flying about, and a minute ago she was preaching a sermon. She talks about these sacred things just as she talks about bread and butter and jam. There seems to be nothing held apart or sacred to

be talked about seriously and thoughtfully. The thought becomes too common."

"It struck me that there was a good deal of thought in her remarks," said Miss Stevens.

"If religion concerns our whole future life, as you claim it does, how can it become too common?" asked the colonel.

"As I said before," remarked the general, "it is simply her birth and training. She was conceived and born with these thoughts. She breathed them with her first breath. She has been taught they are a thing to be lived, to regulate every moment of life by."

But at this moment, Mary arrived to carry off the doctor, as she had promised the folk in the cottages that he would give them a little talk that afternoon.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SERVICE IN THE TEMPLE.

THE next morning dawned cool and cloudless. But the sun did not appear. There was a peculiar atmospheric gray hanging over Willow Springs. The people began to arrive at an early hour for the service at Bethesda. They were met at the door, and ushered into the drawing-room by Malcolm.

The majority came out of curiosity, and had laughed and jested on the way, and were ready to make light of everything. What was it in the atmosphere of the house that the moment they entered caused the jest and light, frivolous word and tone to die away? There was nothing unusual in the appearance of the room. The lace curtains were drawn; but the windows were open to admit the breeze. Flowers in pots and vases bloomed everywhere. There was perfect silence—not a sound to be heard in the house; and the slight noises from outside seemed far away and to be heard with no jarring sound. Those entering caught the silence the minute they crossed the threshold, and it held them mute. When all had arrived, the great doors between the drawing-room and temple were drawn back by Malcolm, who invited the guests to enter.

Mrs. Grey and her husband were already there; also Mr. Solmon. Pansy Brandt sat near a small table that supported her elbow, her cheek resting on her hand. She was without a hat, and her golden hair was piled high on her shapely head in masses of waves and soft curling rings. She was gowned in pure white—a French creation of chiffon. From her snowy neck to her dainty, white-slippered feet, it was a bewildering mass of tiny puffs, tucks, ruffles, and filmy lace. She looked like a small snowdrift tossed into the chair. Her large, liquid, brown eyes were veiled by their black lashes. She did not once lift them to recognize any one of those now entering. Beside her sat Edith and Miss Stevens. Well to the back of the room sat Mrs. Brandt. Carl and Gertrude were very near the dais, on a tiny divan. Four young girls about sixteen years of age, dressed in white organdy, with their hair braided and tied with white ribbon, acted as ushers.

There were about fifty persons present. It seemed as if already some kind of a spell was woven around them. They took their seats in silence. The dim light glowed soft as moonbeams. It was augmented by the peculiar gray of the atmosphere without. We have all seen just such mornings. There were no clouds, no threat of rain nor storm—just an absence of the sun. But the peculiarity of the morning struck one with unusual force. It seemed as if the sun had withdrawn into the silence.

There are times when no tongue that ever spoke, nor pen that ever wrote, can appeal to the soul and stir it to its profoundest depth as can the tones from the organ. In those vast churches and cathedrals there are moments where the notes from this mighty instrument are so majestic, so deep, so enthralling, that they seem to crush one with the weight of their own insignificance, and to cause one to feel they are but the merest speck in the

whole system of created things. The very notes with their sighs, throbs and plaints seem to hold a warning and to cry *Woe, woe!* They seem to tear open every wound, to disclose every suffering, and to reveal as in a vision, sights and sounds so far away. The ghostly forms of men and women hurrying to and fro bowed down by sin and sufferings, moaning *vain, vain, vain!* Again one seems to hear the dread roll of the dirge, and to see the funeral pall, the grave, the sepulcher, even the captive with his parched lips and rusty chains, and to hear his curses loud and deep. And in this night and mystery hot blinding tears fall like rain from eyes that long yet fail to catch a glimpse of light and glory, and the face of Him who stills all pain.

But how different now! Suddenly to those sitting in the silence and twilight of the room, came the deepest, grandest flow of organ notes, growing stronger and more mighty and majestic until, as the great, library doors rolled back, it broke in a storm of melody, swelling louder and louder, higher and higher, filling and reverberating through space until the very air throbbed and trembled. It was like a mighty chain reaching to the dome of heaven with links forged from the mine of hope. Those listening felt themselves lifted to mountain-tops sublime. It seemed a foretaste of heaven—as if earth's bitterness had passed away. Then, lower and lower fell the notes, at last breaking into a trembling prelude, soft and low, and then, from that divine instrument, the human soul, there rose a voice so powerful, so rich, so sweet, that it seemed to penetrate the inmost recesses of life and thrill the hearts of the listeners. There was no strife in the music, no suggestion of wrong or woe. As the glorious melody arose and floated on the wings of song, it seemed only to breathe of hope and love.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul?"

As the heavenly melody died away, there was a subdued flash as of thought itself; and the incandescent lights began to glow and burn. Mary entered from the conservatory and stepped upon the dais. Her gown of creamy *crêpe de chine* clung to her figure and swept the floor. Her luxuriant hair was loosely brushed back from her face. As she stood there, she seemed inwardly as well as outwardly illumined. Her very countenance seemed to emit light, so truly did her soul shine through. Every sound was hushed, and every one became intent to catch the first tones of her magnificent voice. Her eyes dwelt on those present for a brief moment. Then she said:

"We will now have a few moments' meditation."

She clasped her hands and bowed her head. Again the organ breathed forth in minor chords. When it died away, Mary lifted her head and began speaking. Her voice was low and sweet, but clear and distinct, and thrilling with intense earnestness. There was no waving of the arms, nor striving for elocutionary effect:

"We have gathered here this morning to speak the Word that heals and makes glad—the Word of Truth and Love. We have with us some who are strangers to our methods. They ask what is our creed. In the common acceptance of the word we have none. We open our hearts to Truth and welcome it from whatever quarter it may come. At the present day we find ourselves in the midst of a mighty revolution of human thought. The people are speaking with new tongues and singing the new songs according to the promises. Time-honored creeds are losing their hold upon men. Truth is all there is. We believe in the broadest altruism; a brotherhood of humanity. We believe in the highest spiritual

activity, and in not permitting outside control from any source whatever. We believe in the sublime powers resident within the Ego until it shall become as a god, thus being able to control elemental forces. We believe that Knowledge is Power. In other words, to believe without knowledge, is weakness; to believe because one knows, is power. We believe there is no impossibility to him who wills. To this end we study the hidden mysteries of nature and the physic powers latent in man. To do this, purity of thought, purity of word, and purity of deed are essential. This philosophy is rapidly infiltrating the minds of the people. Each man is to himself, absolutely, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The gifts of healing are bestowed by Divine Beneficence with a liberal hand, and they cannot be monopolized by any sect or church. I desire to say to my friends that are here to receive the Word of Healing, to remember that Christ said that 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name I will grant their request.'

"We will now ask, in His name, that all those here afflicted be healed. Sometimes we have a miracle in healing, when people are instantly cured; again, a number of treatments are necessary before a cure is perfected. Should any one not be cured at once, he must not be discouraged. Remember, that 'All things are possible to him that believeth.'"

Mary folded her hands on her breast for a moment, then stretching them forth as if in benediction, said:

"Divine Love fills *you*."

She held her hands extended for an instant, then folding them again on her breast, she said as she bowed her head:

"We will now retire into the silence."

As Mary ceased speaking, the organ seemed to sigh; and a strange, musical sound swept through the room,

vibrating and breaking into a plaintive, moaning cry. The silence became intense. The very birds in their cages, the water in the fountain, seemed to stop and listen. A weird sensation seemed to come over every one.

There were persons there who believed in nothing that was done; yet they were thrilled by the beauty of it. The wailing of the music was evidently intended to suggest that from sorrow comes joy; for it suddenly changed to a glad anthem ringing out, accompanied by many voices. It came in a rapturous shout, growing gladder and gladder, more and more triumphant.

"Sing praises to God, sing praises. Sing praises unto our King. Sing praises!"

There was a pause in the music. It dropped into a low recitative. Mary took it up and raising her eyes heavenward, stretched forth her hand and intoned with intensest feeling:

"Truth's eternal, Truth's eternal."

Then again the voices:

"For God is the King of all the earth. Sing praises with understanding."

Again came Mary's voice: *"Truth's eternal, Truth's eternal."*

As Mary intoned these words, she stepped down from the dais and again stretched forth her hands; her face was illumined from the glowing lights; she seemed, for a moment, transfigured. Then a strange thing happened, as she stood there. A golden circle like a halo appeared just above her head. For a brief instant it was supposed to be some mechanical device; but glancing up it was seen to be the sun breaking through the dim sky and striking the stained glass window; the light so falling on the halo over the head of Christ that it reflected the golden light with all its prisms over the head of Mary. It was a

strange coincidence; and it would be impossible to describe the sensation that it caused. Every one was startled, and at this moment no miracle would have surprised them.

Again the music swept through space, accompanied by the voices of children only:

"Then awaken, then awaken. Let glad voices loud proclaim!"

It seemed as if a thousand harps could be seen glinting in the sun and angel bands rejoicing.

Again the organ thundered forth the proclamation, accompanied by all the voices in a glad, triumphant chorus:

"Truth's eternal, Truth's eternal. Truth forevermore shall reign!"

With rapt face and dilating eyes Pansy had listened to every word Mary uttered. Then, as the organ broke into a wail, it seemed for a moment as if her heart would burst. But, as the notes died away and rang out again in praise and promise, she repeated to herself: "'Whatsoever ye ask in my name I will grant.'"

Oh, how she prayed! Mary's voice thrilled her with the words, *"Truth's eternal, Truth's eternal."* Then the promise was surely true now. She closed her eyes, and a great light seemed to hover over her, and it seemed that she saw, for an instant, the face of Him who said:

"All things are possible to him that believeth."

She opened her eyes just as the entire chorus took up the last refrain, and at the words, *"Truth forevermore shall reign,"* a great strength came to her and rising, she exclaimed in a wildly sweet voice as she stretched her arms toward Mary:

"I *do* believe, I *do* believe!"

Mary held out her arms.

"Come," she said. And in an instant Pansy's golden head was pillowed on Mary's bosom.

Who can analyze the feelings of those present? Their pulses quickened and leaped; it seemed as if the very heavens had opened and revealed a glimpse from afar. The soul was ravished with joy.

* * * * * * * *

The little audience filed out silently, and wended their way back to Willowby Rest.

Bennie, Dick, Donald and Norwood Brinsley walked together. They had gone some distance in silence, when Donald drew a long breath, and said:

"Well, what did you think of it?"

"Don't ask me," said Dick. "I'm dumb. I give it up on the spot."

"Do you suppose Pansy is really cured?" asked Bennie.

"God knows; but I pray she is," said Donald fervently. "*I never* witnessed anything that affected me so much. And Colonel Eversoll—did you see him? His eyes were streaming."

"Wasn't it solemn?" said Bennie. "Maybe it was fancy; but it seemed to me the very heavens above were solemn. I don't know a deuced thing about it, by Jove! But it made me feel awfully queer—'pon honnah."

"As I looked at Mrs. Thornton, to-day," said Norwood Brinsley meditatively, "I realized, for the first time, what that light was that never was on land or sea. It was in her face. I never heard so few remarks with so much in them. It was *multum in parvo.* I felt, as I listened, that she was dropping apples of gold from pitchers of silver. I never heard such an impressive voice. The whole scene was purity itself. It will linger with me always."

As he finished speaking, they reached the springs and stopped for a drink of the water. Three or four carriages containing some of those that had attended the service, were drawn up, waiting for the water to be served to them.

They had recovered their voices and were talking and discussing the affair freely. On all sides one heard such expressions and comments as follows:

"It's all pure delusion," said one.

"This sort of thing is a kind of religious delirium tremens," from another.

"I hate what is called an enterprising woman," said Sidley. "Save me from blue-stockingism, or anything that savors of it."

"She causes a wonderful struggle between the head and the heart," said an elderly gentleman with a kindly voice. "You nearly lose your reasoning power as you look at her, she is so sincere. I think the secret of her success is because her soul is in it."

"You are quite right. There is a subtle something about her very convincing," said a dainty little lady in reply. "Her smile seems to lead you on."

"A beautiful smile is a wonderful factor in this kind of work," said a Mrs. Roland. "The Salvation Army women know the value of it."

"Her thoughts are like her face—pure," said Brinsley. "The angels that make music around the Great White Throne might read them."

"Hear him, ye gods and little fishes!" exclaimed a fashionable, tailor-made gentleman, with a fierce mustache.

At this moment, Horace Burt rose and holding up his glass of water, exclaimed:

"All you have to do is to think *this* is nectar—and there you are! There's nothing but *Mind,* you know."

"What are you thinking about, Mabel? Haven't you an opinion on the subject?" exclaimed one of the ladies. This was addressed to an exquisitely gowned woman, with a superb form, who occupied an elegant victoria, and leaned indolently back among the cushions casting languorous

glances and smiles at the men. She was a widow and a power socially. She wielded a mighty scepter among her friends. She was particularly fond of Norwood Brinsley; their names had been coupled together upon more than one occasion. He now stood leaning against the side of her victoria. Her lip curled when he had spoken a moment previous of Mary; and it was with ill-concealed scorn and contempt she now replied:

"Oh, it was a great act—very effectively gotten up; more dramatic than heavenly though. How she could make up her mind to get herself up in that style, and come out before all her society friends, and make such an exhibition of herself, is more than I can see. It must have required a good deal of nerve."

As she said this, she looked straight into Brinsley's face. He flushed slightly as he replied:

"Nearly as much nerve as was required by our society ladies who gave skirt-dances before all their society friends and posed for Greek statuary with scanty raiment. It was a marvelous triumph of grace and very artistic, I admit; but there was no special imprint of heaven on the act."

The lady in the carriage turned white with rage; for although Brinsley had spoken in a gay, bantering tone, there was no mistaking his covert sarcasm.

"Mrs. Thornton has made one convert already," hastily excaimed some one, trying to cover up the embarrassment caused by Brinsley's remark. "Our old and valued friend has become a disciple—is it not so, Brother Brinsley?"

"Not exactly. They say it's never too late to mend. But at my time of life, to learn to mend, is—well—I'll explain later," laughed Brinsley, as he lifted his hat, bowed and took his leave, accompanied by his three companions.

As they disappeared, another chorus of voices exclaimed:

"The idea of Norwood Brinsley talking about the beauty of holiness."

"Oh, it's only a spasm. He is of the earth, earthy. Brinsley is getting in his dotage," said Horace Burt.

And first one carriage, and then another, began to move toward the hotel. But my lady of the victoria could have strangled Brinsley with good grace.

As the four gentlemen moved away, Bennie said:

"How those women talk about Mrs. Thornton!"

"What do they know of a soul like hers?" said Dick. "No matter what this thing is she is trying to do—God knows, I don't know anything about it—but I do know she is honest in whatever she does. And I thank you, Brinsley, for the stab you gave. I rather think it went home."

"It was cruelly severe, I admit. But I could not help it. We have all seen that woman, with others, dance the skirt-dance with languorous eyes and sensuous movements —very beautiful, but not a particularly healthy picture. After looking at it, you do not feel benefited morally nor intellectually. It did not give rest and inspiration for higher and better things, but instead, there came a sickening feeling and a contempt for human nature. Instead of leaving this artistic exhibition with regret, you rush out into the air and feel glad to get away. I could never conceive of Mary Thornton giving a skirt-dance or posing for scantily-draped statuary. To contrast these two women is like comparing the nude chastity of Godivia to the nakedness of Nana."

Norwood Brinsley was far from spotless; but he had not become so blinded and dazzled by the brightness of wealth and fashion that he had no perception of the good and true.

The next morning, Mary received a package, by mail,

containing six five-hundred dollar bills bound together by a strip of paper, on which was scrawled in a disguised hand: "For the Cottagers."

The people that had chattered at the springs only comprised a small portion of those that had been present at the service, and many were deeply impressed by it, and returned from it in a very subdued and thoughtful mood.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SHE WILL DO WHAT HER HANDS FIND TO DO.

To SEE the young people that flocked to Judge Thornton's, one would have thought it was a Mecca for which they had long sighed. They were subjects of study to Mary. She especially loved Edith. She watched her, and saw the terrible unrest and longing, and felt it was soul starvation; that in the wine of life she was drinking, she found the lees; that it was spiritual food she needed to bring to the surface the dormant life that Mary felt was slumbering in her. Edith was wondrously beautiful, and a great belle. She had marvellous power, and it grieved Mary to hear the hard, cynical tones of her voice and the sharp, keen, scathing sarcasm of her words, and to see her indifference as to whom she offended. Her very laugh, at times, was discordant. Mary knew something of the cause of the broken engagement with the English duke. She knew that when Edith was growing up, she had been warm-hearted and impulsive, and she would not believe those impulses were dead. She felt that her present state was due to the life she was leading.

And Dick—what a glowing, glorious, promising boy he was! How often Dick and his sister would come to spend

a week at Mabelthorp, and they, with herself and Hugh, had romped and rowed and fished together. And now, he was dull, apathetic and listless. And so, in this set in which she moved were many that she knew intimately, of whom Edith and Dick were examples—people with hundreds of thousands of dollars—yea, millions at their command; who could come and go and do as they pleased; who were looked upon with envy, courted and pampered; and yet were bearing a great unrest, carrying a lifelong hunger in their hearts.

Many a millionaire standing at his window, watching the busy throng, and seeing the ordinary business man hurrying to his daily routine, has wondered if in his breast there was the same longing as in his own. If he could but have known the truth, he would have found it was there; because it is everywhere—not always exactly the same kind of unrest, but an unrest, a "dis-ease," an absence of ease, that comes to every soul, high or low, in this world, that is not stimulated and upheld by something higher than mere personal, physical, or business pursuits of life. Mary frequently heard the rich maligned for lack of soul, for love of money, and society for its indifference to humanity's needs, and lack of spirituality. Then she looked at the thousands of men with small bank accounts, their hearts filled with bitterness, envy, and ambition for wealth, the pettiness of money-getting, the strife for preferment; the trickery and fraud. Could this class, whose souls turned on the axis of money-getting, develop spirituality more rapidly than the independently rich? Does it usually hear or heed the plaints of the suffering more quickly than the society devotee? Then among the lowly, deadly-suffering poor: Can *they* develop real spirituality under their fearful environment, their bitter strife for existence? They are struggling and fighting for bread.

The great aim in life, high or low, seems to be to conquer; and this aim crushes the loftiness of soul in either life. Society with its ambitions and its frivolities is not worse than love of gain.

Mary felt and saw all this. She knew, go where she would, she would find similar conditions. Environment made the principal difference. This being so, should she not do what her hands found to do—and do among those she knew and loved and understood? She knew the great mines of soul-wealth and latent energy that were buried under the débris of society and conventional forms and ceremonies. Could she be instrumental in sinking a shaft to the heart of this society, in which she moved, or tunnel into its dormant inactivities and impulses? She did not say, "I will see. I will try." But, on the contrary, she said: "I can and I will."

Was Mary right in her estimate of those among whom she had always lived? Would her attempts by deed and word to act upon her convictions end in dreams, or would they develop certainties for lasting good? Time alone would tell. But back of her efforts, was that firm belief in Infinite Good. The great principles of Truth were perpetually in her heart; and, they daily reinforced her resolve to carry out her convictions.

Good thought never fails in its mission; and just as the sunlight influences vegetation, so Mary's life and pursuits were influencing those around her. It is a strange, though demonstrated fact, that in these days her swiftly traveling mind and life and soul were beginning to penetrate and shine into these socially sick and diseased bodies, transferring to them a wholly irresistible, life-giving power, not as yet fully realized by herself. There was nothing dwarfed about her. Her life was full of inspiration—nothing spasmodic. She was loving and courageous.

She knew all she was facing in thus openly taking this step. She knew the prejudice, the scoffing, with which she would be assailed; but her unwavering faith in the principles for which she stood was unbounded. Almost unconsciously those that knew and loved her were waking up, gradually, to those same principles. Many of these people would grow strong and healthy. The bandages of conventionalism once torn away, it would be difficult to relapse into contentment or to find happiness in their former pursuits.

Mary was not a society destroyer; far from it. She believed in society; that it should and did have its claims. But she felt that an equilibrium should be maintained; that while society was important, it should not be omnipotent. She felt that purely social pursuits were sure to bring unrest, discontent, and disenchantment to life. Therefore it should be held more as a recreation than a pursuit. She felt that the servitude, the vassalage to empty form and vain pursuits should end; that the true domain of society should be to uplift, exalt and stimulate.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MRS. BURTON.

When Carl had been with Mary three or four days, every one was remarking upon the wonderful change there was in him. It was not so. Carl, as yet, had changed but little. It is true he seemed to be very unlike his former self; but it was chiefly for the reason that the principal causes of his troubles were removed; and he was in an entirely different atmosphere. As Carl put it, there were "no bothers at Judge Thornton's." It is true he still made mistakes, but no more than all healthy, well-regulated boys are liable to make. Mary had dispensed with Fanny, and her maid looked after Carl. For the first time in his life he was given *real* opportunity, and was intelligently instructed. There are people that would rather have their homes in perfect order than their children happy. Not so with Mary. There was no place prohibited to the children. They were allowed to play wherever they liked about the house. Nothing was forbidden, and Charles, General Starkweather, and Mary were always ready to answer questions. All this was new to Carl. He had been forbidden to touch this or that article; not allowed to handle certain books or to go into certain rooms. He always had been

limited. As a consequence, the things forbidden were just the things he wanted to do. When told not to handle or touch a certain thing, he was possessed to do so, with the result that from nervousness or over-anxiety in handling a forbidden thing, if it was perishable, he was pretty sure to wreck it; for which he was punished. If he went to his mother's room, both she and the nurses were so sure that he was going to do something to upset his mother's nerves, that he rarely failed to fulfill their predictions; and he was usually sent away in disgrace.

It was all different here, and it seemed very wonderful to Carl to be able to go about without restraint; to feel that he could touch and handle things and ask questions. He was naturally intuitive and quick. He was fearless and would fight where force was used, never yielding until overpowered, and then he was not conquered, but sullenly submissive. Now, he was perfectly happy and was as wax in the hands of Mary, whom he loved devotedly.

Several notes had passed between Mary and Mr. Burton to the effect that Carl was to remain with Mary for the present, or until Mrs. Burton's health improved.

When the new nurse appeared, Mr. Burton was somewhat disappointment. She was an old maid, a Miss Lee. She brought the best recommendations as to character and ability; but she was so strikingly plain that she never would appeal to any one from a physical standpoint. She was tall and angular. Hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes were a regular straw color. Her mouth was large; her complexion florid, her nose rather large, and her chin prominent. Her redeeming features were fine teeth, mild eyes, gentle voice, and robust health. These features were so overshadowed by her other defects that Mr. Burton did not notice them, and made up his mind to send her back to the city. Then he concluded to consult Mrs. Thornton,

to whom he sent her. She very soon returned with a note, that was as follows:

"I feel sure she will do. She is undoubtedly capable.—Mary Thornton."

Mr. Burton paid Fanny a week's wages, and dismissed her, much to that young woman's chagrin. He sent for Carl, and gave Miss Lee her instructions in his presence. Then he told her that she was to return to Mrs. Thornton's and be entirely under her command for the present.

He told Carl that he was to call Miss Lee his governess; for he was too big, now, to have a nurse. This information, coming with a suspension of whippings, made Carl feel quite grown up. He did not fancy this new invasion, and scrutinized her critically; but anything or anybody was better than Fanny, whom Carl hated. Mary was very much amused when Carl asked Gertrude if she believed God made everything, and, on receiving an affirmative answer, to hear him reply:

"Well, I think God must have been in the funny business when he made my new governess."

Mary made a real study of Carl, and talked much to the new governess about him. She was very intelligent, great-hearted, and a lovable woman. She was fond of children, and her heart went out to this almost motherless boy; and she took every pains to win his confidence and affection, with the result that before two weeks were over Carl was ready to fight anything or anybody that said anything against, or called his new governess ugly. In her great tenderness and love for him, she had grown to be quite a beauty in his eyes.

Every day she took the children to see Mrs. Burton. They always brought her something, a new flower, some fruit, or a book or picture, and Miss Lee and Mary became quite absorbed in thinking of new and interesting objects

to send to Mrs. Burton. These little matters were discussed before the children, and Carl and Gertrude were constantly on the lookout for something to carry to her. It is marvelous how quickly an intelligent child can be trained; how speedily the current of their lives can be changed. Carl began to look forward to his visits to his mother, and to feel that he must not go without taking her something, or doing something for her to entertain her while there. On their first visit to Mrs. Burton, before Miss Lee came, Mary had given explicit instructions to Gertrude as to how she must conduct herself in Mrs. Burton's room, so that she might not annoy her. Carl stood by and listened and profited, as Mary had intended he should.

Gertrude, on her first visit, was dressed in her daintiest and most "fetching" gown; and she came as a little sunbeam into the sick woman's life. And Carl—what had come over Carl? While he was in the room, he was quite subdued. He did not once stumble over anything, nor shake nor strike her couch, even when he came and leaned against it.

Once he put out his little hand, and taking one of the jetty curls in his fingers, and holding it up, he said to Gertrude:

"Aren't they pretty?"

"Yes, they are beautiful. And your mmama is beautiful, just like you said she was," said Gertrude, with naïve simplicity.

"Did Carl say that?" exclaimed Mrs. Burton, a lovely pink flush coming into her face.

"Oh, yes! he said you was awful pretty, and it's true, too," said Gertrude, gazing admiringly on the dainty little woman.

Could any compliment have been greater or more sin-

cere? She flushed with pleasure, and reaching out her arm, she drew Carl to her and kissed him impulsively and tenderly. There was a great difference between this caress and the perfunctory, refrigerated kisses he had been in the habit of receiving. Carl *felt* it, and his eyes gleamed. The dear litle soul was thrilled by it. It was *his* mother, and she had kissed *him,* as Gertrude's mother kissed her; and while nothing had been said to him, he *felt* it was because he had been gentle and had pleased her; and he remembered the pain when he hurt himself and wondered if she hurt like that all the time, and began to *think* about it, which he had never done before; and to wish he could do something for her. Thus, his mind began to work, to reach out, to awaken to a true consciousness of his surroundings.

Mrs. Burton was affected by it also. She never supposed Carl thought of her when he was out of her sight. And now, to have this graceful tribute of his thought and admiration come to her, was a great surprise and also very sweet. And again the memory brought a flush of pleasure.

Every day, Mary with Miss Lee and Gertrude, would have a chat with Carl about his mother, and encourage and assist all his plans in carrying comfort and pleasure to her. And the result was quickly apparent.

Mrs. Burton soon began to look forward and to become impatient for the daily visits of the children, and to ignore or make excuses for them if they became a little noisy or too merry. In fact, Dr. Cline had declared, of late, that her rapid recovery was far exceeding his most sanguine expectations, and to give it as his opinion that she would, in time, become entirely well. He said her vitality had renewed itself, her nerves were growing stronger. And she began to move about as she had not

been able to do so since the accident. He congratulated her, and encouraged her in every way. Every hopeful word the doctor uttered was like wine to the sick woman. He had anticipated that she would get much better, but he had not hoped for perfect recovery. Now, he not only hoped, but felt sure in his heart she would entirely recover; and so, told everybody that it was only a question of time before she would be perfectly well. It made a new man of Mr. Burton. Every day the new hope kept singing in his heart that she would get well. Thus, every one in thinking of her thought only of her returning health. And there is no power like living thought. Nothing can equal it. Set a number of minds thinking in the same current, and watch the result. That is why prayer is all-powerful. True prayer is the quintessence of thought. To pray is to breathe power, to generate force. That is why we are enjoined to pray without ceasing. To fill the soul with eternal prayer is to fill it with eternal force. When a man prays truly and honestly, his heart is filled with love, with hope, with justice, and sweet charity. These attributes breathed forth in prayer, if rightly understood and united in by all peoples, would move the world with an energy that would excel all other forces combined, and wholly revolutionize our lives.

CHAPTER XXV.

MARY TRIES TO AWAKEN DICK.

"LIBERTY HALL" might have been carved over the door of Bethesda. For that is just what it was. Every one was welcome, especially Mary's friends and acquaintances. Dr. Malridge, Colonel Eversoll, Harry, Dick, Bennie, and Donald were perfectly at home there, and came and went at their pleasure without form or ceremony. Also a number of ladies, young and old, including the Brandts and Miss Stevens. They had all been more or less impressed by Mary's words, her home, and her pursuits. She was a prime favorite with all of them. They did not understand her methods; therefore, as they were too fond of her to criticize, they said nothing. One morning, a few days after the service in the temple, Dick, Donald and Bennie were lounging in the Bethesda library, reading.

Mary, Edith and Miss Stevens came in, which roused the gentlemen from their papers and books. They were all on familiar terms, and in a jolly, delightful, bantering mood. And it soon became a very gay party. Many subjects were chatted over, but nothing of a religious or philanthropic turn until Bennie and Donald got into a dispute, and made a wager; when Bennie declaring he was "broke," laughingly turned to Edith and said:

"I see you have your purse, Miss Brandt. Please be my banker."

"Oh, don't call upon me!" exclaimed Edith. "I'm in the same fix. I emptied my purse into the hands of a beggar just before I came in."

"And consequently haven't even a penny for poor me whom you have known all your life. It's all right if *I* go hungry," said Bennie assuming a grieved expression.

"A little starving would do you good—teach you humility," laughed Edith.

"Oh, I felt awfully sorry for that man," said Miss Stevens, referring to the beggar. "You know he didn't look like a beggar, and he blushed when he asked for alms, and actually wanted to return part of the money Edith gave him."

"Where is he? Where is he?" excitedly exclaimed Donald, springing up. "For a long time I have been wanting some soft easy snap by which I could make a lot of money. I can make my fortune just showing him as a curiosity—a beggar freak."

"Yes," drawled Dick, who was lazily half reclining on a divan. "That was a clever trick in him, wasn't it? These fellows know how to get on the right side of the ladies. You will empty your purse again in his hands the next time you meet him, won't you? These human parasites that live off the rich, ought to be banished from the earth. Mrs. Thornton, can't you suggest some stray planet that we might transport them to?"

Mary made no reply, and Edith remarked:

"Well, I don't think the poor affect the lotus-eaters, and I believe that is your normal diet, is it not?"

"How severe!" said Dick languidly. "There is where you are mistaken. Could you see the letters to my agent, and read how these parasites grumble at the rents and

rebel at paying, after your letting them have a home to live in, to keep them out of the street! It's awful. They have no sense of what you do for them."

When Dick drawled out the last sentence, Mary who had been sitting with her arm resting on the table, toying with her fan, looked up, and for the life of you, you could not have told whether she was going to laugh or cry. Every eye was turned toward her. They waited an instant for her to speak. Then Dick continued:

"Don't you think I am right, Mrs. Thornton?"

"Do you really want my opinion?" she asked.

"I certainly do," said Dick with a trifle more animation than usual.

"Are the poor parasites on the rich? Stop and think. You own a number of blocks of houses down in the tenement district of the city. These are a large source of income to you. The tenants toil and sweat to earn the dollars to give to you. And what are they getting in return? Not even a healthful place to live in—crowded, unkept, unhealthy; and when they cannot pay the rent they are turned out. For you *must* have money to live on. They *must* pay. Parasites?' Are they keeping you or you them? They give you clean money that you in your fastidiousness can use. You give them houses, through an unscrupulous agent, that are not fit to live in. They are frequently death-traps. Little or nothing is done for comfort or to insure safety in case of fire. *You* are insured in a big company. Should your houses burn up and destroy half the lives in them or the tenant's property, they lose, not you. So far as the value is concerned, *you* are all right, and their money pays for your insurance. But they are not insured. You can rebuild again; but they will have nothing. You never go near to look after them yourself. If their houses were health-

ful, and not over-crowded, then the obligation would be mutual. As it is, it's very one-sided. Think about it, Dick; think about it," said Mary, rising. "And now I am going to ask you to excuse me as I have some duties to attend to. I shall expect you all to remain to luncheon."

And she left the room without any apology for her plain speech. No one spoke for a minute. Then Edith laughed and said:

"Well, you asked for Mrs. Thornton's opinion. What do you think of it?"

"By Jove! I don't know but what there is some truth in it," said Dick with considerable animation for him. "There is one thing about it. She is not afraid, and whenever she speaks, she says something. Her advice to think about it is good. I *will* think about it," laughed he lightly as he rose and commenced sauntering listlessly about the room.

"Do you know," said Bennie, "Mrs. Thornton affects me strangely. Most people, when they get to talking about charity and religion and things make me feel as if I were of no account—too small and too insignificant for anything; and I always want to get away. But she always makes me feel as if I were six feet tall, and as strong as a giant. I feel as if I wanted to start right out and accomplish something great; and I have to go and look at myself in the glass before I can realize I am not all that I feel," finished Bennie gaily, as he moved over to a large mirror and surveyed himself. Then, turning and making a sweeping bow, he said: "There, now! I am convinced I am only 'little Bennie Gordon.'"

"Did you ever notice what a beautiful color comes into her face when she gets in earnest?" asked Donald.

"That's because she feels all she says," replied Miss Stevens.

"I would give the world to be all that I believe her to be," said Edith, gazing dreamily out of the window.

The three gentlemen looked at her, and then glanced at one another. Miss Edith Brandt—an heiress, beautiful, brilliant, a belle of the smart set of New York, to make such a wish.

"It's a woman's caprice," thought Donald.

"She wouldn't if she could," thought Dick.

But Bennie said aloud: "To use little Carl Burton's expression, 'She's a dream.' I never can see enough of her. I wish she wouldn't run away. How I wish I could understand what she said the other day, about atmosphere. It was awfully queer and mystifying, don't you know. Every time I see Carl Burton I envy the little rascal—I do, 'pon honnah—because he can stay here all the time."

"Dear little Bennie!" laughed Edith; "it's a good thing you can't. We can't afford to lose you; and if you remained here you would soon grow so big, in feeling, you would fancy yourself the President of the United States."

At this moment the butler announced luncheon; and they adjourned to the dining-room.

CHAPTER XXVI.

COLONEL BRANDT'S FAMILY.

PANSY BRANDT had not used her crutches since the eventful morning when she had walked to Mary. Mrs. Brandt was overjoyed. She could not understand it; but the fact that although Pansy was still weak, she could dispense with those awful, disfiguring crutches, and move about filled her with happiness; and she cared for little else. She was little interested in the cause so long as the facts remained. Colonel Brandt had been called to the Pacific Coast, and he only knew from telegrams that Pansy was better, and, like his wife, that was sufficient for him.

Not so with Edith. She had been deeply impressed. It had been only about ten days since Mary had arrived at the Springs; but in that time Edith had heard more strange and peculiar things than in all her life previous. She did not know what to make of it. She had gone to Sunday-school, when a child, and when old enough, had been confirmed. She always had attended church, but she knew nothing of religion outside of it. She never had heard religion or the Bible discussed. The Sunday afternoon at Willowby Rest was a revelation to her, and had set

her thinking deeply on religious subjects. Then, she discovered that Isabel had made a study of the Bible, and was interested in Mary's line of work, and seemed to understand it. The cure of Colonel Eversoll and little Ruth had filled her with hope for Pansy; and she had shut herself up in her room, and prayed sincerely that her loved sister might also receive the blessing of health. And when Pansy walked to Mary it seemed too good to be true. She felt it was a miracle, and that there was something more, some deeper meaning to all this than what appeared on the surface. But how to get it, what to do, she did not know. She felt she ought to do something to show her gratitude, but she did not know how to do it.

Why should Edith have hesitated to go to Mary or Miss Stevens and talk the matter over freely with them? Had it been a social matter she would have done so at once. Simply for the reason that she could not sufficiently familiarize herself to talk on the subject that had always seemed to her separate and apart from her real life.

There are things in nature that belong to the natural development of both sexes into manhood and womanhood that are tabooed by parents as things not to be discussed; and religion is frequently treated in the same way—as a thing that exists and *is,* but never to be questioned or familiarly talked about.

This spiritual and physical knowledge is the most essential of all to serve as a firm foundation upon which to build true manhood and womanhood; and should be the first and most important and the very groundwork of youthful education. Yet, these great fundamental truths are shut up in a Gothic church through the week; and parents whisper or shun to educate children as to their physical being.

How many wrecked lives have been caused from this

lack of education. Is there not some one with strength of lungs and courage enough to cry aloud from the house-tops against this crime to the young? When one thinks of it the wonder is, not that there are so many lives ruined by this neglect, but that there are not more.

How many girls rise on their bridal morn, ignorant as babes as to their future life, duties and responsibilities! How many young men are rushed out into the world, unhedged, unfortified either by spiritual or physical truths, there to learn in that school of promiscuous knowledge, vices that mar them for life! And who is to blame? Parents, and they alone. A minister may preach until doomsday, and if his hearers will not heed, if they will not take the great truths home that he gives them, and live them, it is not his fault, but theirs.

Parents in the more advanced circles, look to it that their children shall be accomplished, know their Greek and Latin and English. But these great, essential truths, that would be like a coat of armor to them, when going forth to battle with life, that would turn the dagger-point of sin and sloth from their souls, and make them healthful, wholesome, helpful citizens, a blessing to themselves and to posterity, they are profoundly ignorant of until too late. Should you tell the parents that their children had not been well raised they would bitterly resent it. But it is true. They are little or no better than heathens.

Mrs. Brandt was a clever, bright woman; but she disliked anything out of the ordinary. She was sensitive to ridicule. She lived within a circle that belonged to her, that had become a part of her. She was a sort of central sun around which her surroundings moved in an orderly way. Anything outside the prescribed limits she had nothing to do with, and it had nothing to do with her as its central figure. The impress of herself was to be seen

within these limits. She gave liberally to charities, and let some one else look after the bestowing of her gifts. That was all separate and apart from her home and her own doings. She had no memory of words of love spoken to the suffering, or memorable act done. She had a desire to emulate socially. This desire she gratified to its fullest extent. She really had no spirituality. She was unconsciously an idolater. All the forms, figures and symbols that lead up socially she idolized. In a way she really loved her children. She said she worshiped them, and in her way she did. They were both brilliant and beautiful. She was proud of them. She was filled with pride at the sensation Edith had created abroad, and when the title of one of oldest dukedoms was laid at her feet, Mrs. Brandt was overjoyed at the thought of this brilliant alliance; and while she really wanted Edith to be happy, yet she was filled with regret at her breaking off with this English duke. She felt it would have given them such standing abroad. Still she was really far from what one would call a frivolous woman. She was of good lineage. She had dignity and pride, and no scandal had ever tarnished her name. Yet she had that slavish love for the flesh-pots of Egypt; she so loved power, was so involved in the pursuit and pleasures of society, dress and personal gratification that she had little time for anything else. Manners and social standing were the first essentials necessary in her opinion; morals were a secondary consideration.

She was of Southern birth. The old negro mammy who had nursed her had, with the aid of a younger assistant, brought up Pansy and Edith also. It was at her knee they had learned to lisp their first prayer, and on her ample bosom they were hushed to rest. Mrs. Brandt prided herself upon not knowing a thing about her children's bring-

ing up. She went to the nursery once every day and looked at them; then her duty was done. When they grew older, they had a governess, and later were sent to school. But it was always to Aunt Betty they went in affliction instead of to their mother.

Mrs. Brandt would have stoutly resented the idea that they were not religious. They supported the church, and all its charities liberally. They were regular attendants. They talked about the Church and its charities in a general way; but religion, the true essence, the thing the Church stood for, was never discussed. All the religion they knew they found in the church when they entered it, and it still remained there when they left.

This illness of Pansy had brought the mother and daughters closer together than ever before. Mrs. Brandt was very grateful for Pansy's recovery; but to tell the truth, she would have been doubly grateful if it had been done in the regular, orthodox way, by a regular physician. She so disliked anything unusual; and the day Pansy rose up from her chair and walked to Mrs. Thornton, it was really quite a shock to her. But she overcame it, in a measure, and had yielded gladly to Mary's request to keep Pansy with her until she would become perfectly strong.

And what a light was breaking in on Pansy! The atmosphere that surrounded the Thorntons was deeply religious. It was not the kind that is kept in a closet and worn on stated occasions; but they ate, drank, slept and breathed their religion every hour of their lives. They talked it freely, compared notes, and watched results.

Pansy had a little proud, imperious way with her. She had a quick, keen, bright intellect, but under it all she was frank, truthful and childlike; and on account of her being the youngest and a pet, she was a good deal of an ivy. She had always loved Mary, but since she felt she had gained

her health through her, she worshiped her; and being in the house with Mary, and seeing how beautiful her character was, she clung to her, and soon desired above all things to be as much like her as possible. Like little Carl and all others that were much in the society of Mary, Pansy was waking up, little by little, to a new view of her surroundings.

Many of the sojourners at the Springs were beginning to think of Newport. Some had gone, others were going. Colonel Eversoll had returned to his family in New York. Edith and her mother had gone to the city for a few days. They had a villa at Newport; but would not open it until the first of July. Miss Stevens had gone home, to Boston.

One day, while at the Springs, Edith had heard Gertrude talking to Carl As usual, they were having a dispute about something, and she heard Gertrude say:

"But you've got to do your part, too. If you wanted some nice flowers in your yard, how would you get them?"

"Pray for them," replied Carl.

At this answer Gertrude laughed long and loud, and she said:

"Well, you wouldn't get them."

"I'd like to know why I wouldn't. You're the funniest girl I ever saw. One minute you say, when you want things, you've got to pray like blazes; and the next minute you say you don't. There's not a bit of sense in it, so there ain't.' "

"Well, Carl, do you expect God to do everything and you do nothing?"

"I don't know what you mean."

"Well, if you wanted some flowers you would dig up the ground and put in some seeds. That would be *your* part. Then God would make them grow. That would be *His* part. If you expect God to do things for you, you've got

to do your part, too. God is back of it all. He gives you sense and the seed and the ground. So, you see, you've just *got* to do your part if you want things."

Edith kept thinking of this. There seemed a great deal of truth in it; but how to do her part she did not know. When she reached the city, she poured out all her desires and perplexities in old Betty's ears, not neglecting to tell her of the conversation between Carl and Gertrude. And old Betty, who was overwhelmed with joy at Pansy's recovery, when Edith had finished, exclaimed, while the tears of thankfulness rolled down her withered cheeks:

"Dat's the trufe, suah 'nuff, Miss Edith. Dat chile dun got a lot o' sense. Lawd! how I jis prayed to de Throne of Grace for Miss Pansy to git well, an' now, jis like dat chile says, de good Lawd is back of it all, an' He dun made her well, an' now we got to do sumpen to show our thankfulness an' to show de Lawd we is wilin' to do our part."

"But, Aunt Betty, what can we do?"

"Well, I 'spect yo' better gib some money or sumpen to somebody. Dunno what else yo' kin do."

"But, Aunt Betty, that's so easy. That doesn't seem like anything. I feel I ought to do something for somebody that is suffering."

"Well, I 'spect you'se right, Miss Edith. But how yo' gwine to do it? How is yo' gwine to find 'em?"

"That's just it, Aunt Betty; but we must find some way to do it. Can't you think of some way?"

"I kain't think of nobody, 'ceptin' Miss Dolores. You know she dun go to yore church, an' I hear, shore 'nuff how she workin' foah the pore all de time. I 'spect she could tell yuh, honey, jis what to do."

Miss Dolores had been, and was still, possessed of a good deal of wealth. Many years ago she gave up society and

devoted herself entirely to missionary work. But except at church or Sunday-school, Edith rarely saw her.

The first Sunday Edith was in town, she went to church. There was a stranger in the pulpit. He preached a red-hot sermon against the rich—their idleness, their selfishness, and their unwillingness to aid the poor. He pictured the suffering in the cities, and then went on to speak of social conditions. The man was an honest, well-meaning man; but instead of being a preacher, he was a shrieker, a scolder. He worked himself up into a perfect tempest, and ended in getting about as far from the real truth, as the people whom he condemned. But in the state that Edith was in, it made a deep impression.

The next day she determined she would go and see Miss Dolores; who was an elderly woman, and she would tell her just how she felt and ask her advice. She found Miss Dolores at home, and soon made her acquainted with her desire to do something useful. She soon convinced Edith that she was leading a useless life, and that there was but one remedy. She must step down and out of the social circle, and go down amongst the poor, and give not only her money, but her time in teaching them and trying to convert them, and make them good men and women. She told Edith that in order to do good she must sacrifice and deny herself. Then she gave her a brief outline of her work; of how many poor she visited a week; and the suffering she relieved. She took her into the library where there were thread, needles, scissors and cuttings scattered all over the floor; and piles of garments on tables to be distributed to the poor. She told of the amount of work required until Edith's head ached at the immensity of it. And she vaguely wondered if she could ever do so much; but she bravely determined to make the effort.

When Edith reached home she lost no time in seeking

her mother's presence, and announced to her that she did not intend to go to Newport for the season, but intended remaining in town, and would work in the interests of, and teach the slum-dwellers.

The surprise and disgust of Mrs. Brandt can better be imagined than described. And there ensued a scene such as had never been witnessed in the Brandt family. But Edith's resolution was not shaken. She remained fixed in her determination in spite of her mother's anger and tears. She had but one regret, and that was that she had not talked freely to Mary about it. She felt sure, in her own mind, that from her she would find both approval and sympathy. But she would make up for it now. She would write her a long letter, telling her how she longed to be instrumental in saving those downtrodden souls, and would ask for her advice. The return mail brought her the following reply from Mary:

My Dear Edith: I have this moment received your letter and answer it without delay. My dear girl, believe me, you are all wrong. You ask me for advice. First, let me answer, or rather refer to your desire which you express in your letter. You speak of the Commandments. Do you not know that honor thy father and mother is one of the Commandments? Then, in everything that is reasonable you must obey your parents, else you cannot honor them. You say your mother says, 'Give what you please but keep out of the slums.' My dear child, she is right. It is not the place for you. It is better to conform to the customs of your position than to offend by oddity. Social obligations are much to your friends, your father and mother. Can you afford to offend them? Besides, what good will it do? Make all unhappy; and for what? —when you can do so much more and keep all harmo-

nious by being rational. You have duties to perform to your friends, your parents. If you really desire to aid those less fortunate than yourself, you need not go out of your own home to reach the slums.

"If you think soul-saving your mission, isn't a soul saved in the drawing-room as valuable as a soul saved in the slums? Then besides, if you really 'save a soul,' found in your drawing-room, the chances are that that soul has money, which that soul, if truly saved and converted, can use in a way to save many souls in the slums.

"Stop and think, then, how far your influence is extending. The soul you awaken may be a man who is much more fitted to go into the slums than you are. Just think of being able to give freely as you can do. You are indeed blessed in that alone. There are so many good people who want to do something. They can give their time, but they have no money. Think what a combination you can form. Instead of going down into the slums yourself, you can co-operate with those that are working there, and who *understand* the work. You can have the same end in view, and come in close contact with the people you would serve. One person cannot do everything. You can aid and encourage with your money. There is a time as well as a place for all things. Your place, at present, is in your own home, under the protection of your parents.

"I read in an interesting book, the other day, where a minister of a fashionable church, in writing to a friend, said:

"'My church is wealthy—full of well-to-do, satisfied people: the standard of their discipleship is, I am aware, not a nature to respond to the call to suffering or personal loss. Shall I go back to my people next Sunday, and stand up before them in my large city church, and say, "Let us follow Jesus closer. Let us walk in His steps, where

it will cost us something more than it is costing us now. Let us pledge ourselves not to do anything without first asking what Jesus would do"? If I should go before them with that message it would be a strange and startling one to them. But why?'*

"Then the good man let his pen fall unable to answer the question. Do you think his church an exception to most of our fashionable churches? And if this man could realize this condition among the very people he had labored with for years, do you not think that there is something to be done outside the slums?

"Do you think the good little Salvation Army lasses are afraid to go into the slums and ask the people to turn to Jesus and 'walk in His steps'? Not at all. Nor are the slums nearly so apt to be startled by the request.

"Then, my dear, is there no missionary work for you in your own set? I truly think it is more needed, for the sin must be greater where people have eyes and see not, ears and hear not. Think of your position and influence and how many you can secure to co-operate with you. You are in touch with them. Your position commands attention. You speak lightly of your wealth, of dress and of your social position. They are all blessings if not selfishly abused. Your wealth has given you refined tastes and instincts which you have a right to enjoy. Beauty is not vain, nor the rational adornment of it. Society, temperately enjoyed, is a necessary recreation.

"You say you feel you should sacrifice yourself. I don't think sacrifice absolutely necessary for doing good; nor do I think it necessary to wear some kind of livery. Pharisaism I think is to be avoided; reason and commonsense cultivated. Study moderation. Do what your hands find to do.

---

* "In His Steps." Rev. Chas. M. Sheldon.

"You say you are wretched. It is a disease. Above all things preserve the moral health of your soul. To do good, cheerfulness of spirit is essential. 'Banish the winter of your discontent.' Bid Hope and Love enter instead. Be practical. Be consistent. *Be still.* 'Be still and know that I am God.' Think of those words, *Be still.* If you follow this, you will be surprised to know how quickly you will be led. These are moral virtues so easy of attainment by one that will in truth and sincerity strive to cultivate them. And when you have attained them, you will then hear all the divine harmony ringing and singing in your soul. Keep the undercurrent of Thought flowing deep and strong. You will then become so saturated with the great Truth that you will draw unto yourself all that is most helpful.

"To the darkest cloud a silver lining—a way out of every difficulty. *Be still and know.* The way to do good will be opened to you, believe me.

"God bless you, dear. Write me when I can serve you. With love, MARY THORNTON.

"P. S. Pansy is blooming. I expect to go to Newport, for a little time, late in the season, and shall be much disappointed if I do not find you there M. T."

Edith read this letter with growing surprise, it was so totally different from what she had expected. She had anticipated support and approval from Mary for the stand she had taken. She supposed that in taking this religious and philanthropic step, she had given up Newport, and society altogether.

Edith was very much distressed. She did not know what to think. She had unbounded faith in Mary; yet she couldn't understand how religion, philanthropy, society, dress and the enjoyment of wealth could go hand in hand

for Good. It was so different from any proceeding she had heretofore heard or read of. All the rich people that took up this kind of work, invariably gave up society and were rarely seen by their old friends. She recalled the talk on the lawn the morning after the cure of the colonel; how Mary was censured and criticized. She knew vaguely that Mary was carrying on some kind of philanthropic work besides what she was doing at Bethesda; but she did not know exactly what it was. If Mary only had told her what to do! But she had not. She had told her she would be led; but how was she to know? She read the letter again. Then she buried her face in the pillows on the divan, where she was sitting, and prayed for guidance. She determined to *be still and—wait.*

CHAPTER XXVII.

MENTAL TELEPATHY.

DICK and Bennie had come up to the city the day before. They had breakfasted and were standing on the corner of the street, and had just decided to go out to Dick's country-place, to look over the stables and kennels. Dick put up his hand to hail a hansom to take them to the station, and as the driver drew up to the curbstone, Dick suddenly stopped and said:

"The Brandts are in town. Suppose we drop in and see Edith first;" and thrusting a "tip" into the hands of the driver to soothe his disappointment at the loss of the expected fare, they, without a moment's hesitation, turned their faces in the direction of the Brandt mansion which was only two blocks away. The servant who met them at the door, said, as he preceded them:

"Miss Brandt is in the library."

Edith was much surprised to see them, but she was also glad. They were Mary's friends, and they, at least, did not ridicule her. Besides, they had been at Willow Springs and knew all that had occurred there. And since the scene between Edith and her mother, their relations had been rather strained, and it was a relief to see some

one to whom she could talk, even while she felt convinced that they would not have any real sympathy in either religious or philanthropic pursuits.

Both Bennie and Dick noticed that Edith was not quite her serene self, and wondered what was the matter. Then it occurred to Dick that perhaps Pansy was worse, and he inquired if she had heard from Mary.

"Yes," she replied, a warm glow coming into her cheeks, and her voice taking a sort of defiant tone; "I have just received this letter. Would you like to read it? It will surprise you, I think. There, take it!" holding it out to him. "Read it aloud so Bennie can hear it. There are some things in it I do not understand. Perhaps you can enlighten me."

She gave him the letter more in a spirit of sheer perversity and desperation than anything else, feeling that it would be but a moment's passing interest to either of them.

Dick took the letter and read it aloud, from beginning to end without comment. Then he folded it carefully and handed it back to Edith. There was a short pause. Then Edith said:

"Well, what do you think of it? Have you nothing to say about it?"

"So you think of taking up missionary work, do you?" asked Dick quizzically, leaning back in his chair.

This nettled Edith, and she flushed with anger as she said defiantly:

"Yes, I do, and I let you see that letter, because you have both been at the Springs, and because I thought you were both friends of Mrs. Thornton; and I supposed you would at least treat it with consideration and respect. But, I might have known better."

She spoke in a nervous, excited manner, with more real

feeling than Dick had ever given her credit for. He was a little surprised; but while he was convinced that this spasm of charity work would not last long, he saw that she was terribly in earnest—at least, for the present.

He gleaned from the letter that Edith was meeting opposition from her mother, and that she had declined to go to Newport. He was delighted to see that Mary, with her usual good sense, had come to the rescue. He felt that the state of mind Edith was in was the reaction from what they had all witnessed at Willow Springs and the cure of Pansy.

As he was an old friend of the family as well as a friend of Mary, he concluded he could do nothing better than stand by Edith in her present dilemma. So, he said with a good deal of earnestness:

"You are mistaken if you think I am not interested. The letter has set me thinking."

"Is it possible you can think?" said Edith sarcastically.

"By a great effort," good-naturedly replied Dick. "Shall I tell you what I was thinking?"

"I don't suppose it will be worth hearing; but I will listen," she replied ungraciously.

"Thank you," said Dick laughing. "You know Mrs. Thornton said you must 'be still and know.' Now, you should have followed her directions."

"I did," replied Edith, her face aflame. "When I read that letter, I just put my head down on this pillow and prayed with all my strength that I might be led to do the right thing; and I had just determined I would be still and wait the results, when you came in."

Edith said this half defiantly. She never had acknowledged, before, to any one that she ever prayed, and why she should have done so now, to two of the most in-

different men of her acquaintance she did not know. Bennie and Dick looked at her in astonishment. Then Dick sprang up, and slapping Bennie on the shoulder, said:

"Bennie, old boy, according to this letter we were both led here this morning. I shall soon begin to believe in miracles myself. What have you to say about it—eh?"

But without replying, Bennie got up and said to Edith:

"I want to use your telephone a minute." He knew where to find it and left the room.

Dick turned to Edith and told her how they had made up their minds to go out of town, and how, quick as a flash, it came to them to call upon her.

"Now I propose we all go into the charity business for a brief spell, and pay penance for our sins," said Dick. "It will be a jolly lark and something new. Suppose we all go down to the Springs in the morning, and you can tell Mrs. Thornton that you have made two converts already—yes, three; for we'll make old Donald come, too. And now I'll speak for myself personally," continued Dick, coming over and taking a vacant chair near her.

"I am ready and willing to help you out personally or with my purse in any and in all charity work you may undertake. I only want to advise you in one thing, and that is, be guided by Mrs. Thornton in whatever you do."

Edith had listened with wide eyes. There was a pause; then she said:

"You, *you!* Richard Braintree. Do you mean it?"

"I honestly mean it, and will prove it to you," replied Dick. For the moment he was full of animation.

"I would as soon have thought of the heavens falling as of you doing anything of this kind."

Dick lifted his eyebrows.

"If the handsome, proud, distinguished belle of New York, Miss Brandt, can do it, why not I?"

"Because you are a man, and because men are——"

"What?" queried Dick.

"Inconstant, unreliable—but I remember you said it was for a brief period. You limit yourself."

"How ungracious and uncharitable when I am trying to be good," said Dick assuming a grieved tone. "I think I should withdraw my offer; but I won't. What is it about turning the left cheek when you're 'smote' on the right? I'll see if I can follow the injunction. I'll promise to be faithful until——"

"Until?"

"Well, until you find a substitute. How will that do?"

"I'll wager you will be advertising for a substitute before the month is out," laughingly replied Edith.

"Possibly," he acquiesced.

At this moment Bennie returned, and Dick exclaimed: "What's the matter with you, Bennie? Haven't you anything to say? Have you lost your chivalry?" Then turning to Edith he said: "For several days he has almost lived at Judge Thornton's—actually playing with Carl and Gertrude. The other day, I went over there and found both him and Pansy playing with the children."

"And, by Jove! Miss Edith, Dick took a hand at the sport himself," retorted Bennie. "He offered to draw Miss Pansy down to the cottages in Carl's little wagon, but she declined with thanks."

"Enough, enough!" exclaimed Dick, waving his hands. "Let us return to the first question. I have pledged myself to Miss Brandt in this charity work Are we to have your co-operation?"

"Well, the plain truth, without any trimmings, is, that I'm already pledged," replied Bennie.

Dick looked at him a minute, then said:

"What are you talking about, Bennie?"

"Only this. For days I have been watching Mrs. Thornton, and I found out all about her work down at the cottages; and I made some inquiries and found that Judge Thornton was doing a lot of things for boys here in the city. I attended a number of beautiful services in the little temple. Dick says I played with the children. I did; for I wanted to hear Gertrude talk, and I have learned more from that child than I ever knew before, by Jove! and I felt ashamed of myself. Even that little girl was doing more than I. I thought a good deal about it, and at first, I felt I'd hate to cut my friends and quit my club and discharge my valet. But at last I made up my mind I'd do it. So I went to see Mrs. Thornton, and told her what I had decided to do. She looked at me in surprise, and egad! what do you think she said?"

"What did she say?" queried Edith, anxiously.

"Go on, Bennie. We can never guess," said Dick.

"No, I don't think you can. By Jove! she has the queerest way of looking at things. I always supposed that when you went in for all this sort of thing you had to wait upon yourself, and give up things, and give the money to the poor. And I told her so, and she said:

"'Don't do extravagant and foolish things and become eccentric. I wouldn't discharge so faithful a servant as Alfred and give his money to some one else. You would better hire an additional valet, and give employment to as many as possible. The more they take care of you, the more time you will have to think of other things; and they can help you out a great deal if you can get them interested. In helping you they will feel they are help-

ing in the good work, and in this way, you see your charitable work will begin right in your immediate surroundings. It will be a stimulus to you as well as to them. Don't quit any of your friends; and as for your club, I think it is, or ought to be, a necessary adjunct to this sort of thing. It's a good place to talk about it, you know. Only be careful that you don't talk too much. *Think* more than you talk. Thoughts are things, you know. They move the world. Nobody talked to you about taking up this kind of work; but you see you are doing it. It is the atmosphere that you are unconsciously drawing around you.'

"By Jove! I never heard of anything so funny. I don't understand it a bit, but you see, we've had another evidence of it this morning. No one suggested our coming here; yet we came on the spur of the moment after we had decided to go somewhere else. And the thought came to Dick—not me. And we came just when you needed us the most."

"Oh, Bennie!" exclaimed Edith, "I do believe you were sent to me this morning; for I was truly miserable. I begin to realize what it means to 'Be still and know.' I am not very good, and I'm not a bit changed, only in this way: I do feel grateful for Pansy's recovery. It's all a great mystery to me. I don't understand it at all. But I feel I ought to make some kind of a sacrifice or do something to show my real gratitude. To just accept this great blessing of health for her, and never do anything for any one else that is suffering seems so heartless. I don't know why I didn't go and have a talk with Mrs. Thornton myself. I was there every day; but some way, I couldn't do it. And you know she is always gay and pleasant, and she don't talk about those things much, herself."

"That's it," said Bennie. "She *thinks* more than she *speaks*. She took me down to the cottages and all over the place, and it's just wonderful; and if you could just see how every one of those people love her! and Malcolm is worth a good deal of money, and you could not get him to leave Mrs. Thornton and the general. The cottages are in his charge, and both he and his wife, Trixey, are as proud of them as if they belonged to them."

"Well, I'll be blessed!" said Dick, who had listened to Bennie and Edith in amazement; "I feel that I am truly called to look after you two children. I agree with Mrs. Thornton in one thing, at least, and that is, that missionary work, like charity, should begin at home. I have found my work. You are getting too good altogether. You need attention."

This was the first time Bennie had ever taken any important step without consulting Dick, and the latter began to realize that Bennie was not so much of an infant as he supposed.

"It isn't because I am good," said Bennie; "and while I'd like to do some useful thing, I don't mind confessing it's as much to please Mrs. Thornton as anything else. I am never so happy as when I am in her house. I would rather spend my summer helping her and Miss Edith than to go to Newport. I had hinted to Alfred that I was going to discharge him. So, after I had the talk with Mrs. Thornton, I went to the hotel and told him that not only could he remain, but I would employ his brother also, as he was out of a place. Alfred was almost paralyzed for a minute, and then he nearly fell over himself with joy. You see, his brother is getting old, and it is hard for him to get a place. His master died about a year ago. Alfred at once begged me to reduce his salary. I told him no; and I'm going to see if I can interest him

as Mrs. Thornton suggests. His brother is very smart and speaks several languages that he learned while living abroad; and he kept all his master's accounts. I shall like him for that reason. It always gives me a pain to even think of figures."

"Well, this is all very amazing; but what have you decided to do?" inquired Dick.

"Nothing, as yet. I am going to be guided by Mrs. Thornton. I was going to buy a fine yacht this summer; and instead of that, I am going to put the money into this work in some way. Mrs. Thornton told me she had a project for putting people out on land, and that she was trying to secure more land; and when she got it she would be glad of my assistance. Then I told her I had a lot of land over in Jersey, and asked her why she couldn't use that. But I told her it wasn't very rich. My! You ought to have seen how her eyes gleamed. And she said, 'Never mind. We can use it all right. We will make it rich, and we can plant beans and cabbage, and chickens and incubators and eggs and violets and pigs and roses and turkeys,'" said Bennie, getting everything mixed.

But, strange to say, neither Dick nor Edith laughed. They were too absorbed in the idea that he was advancing. And Bennie went on:

"I couldn't understand it; for when I said I would give the land to charity, she said I need not give it. And when I asked her for an explanation, she said they now had a place in operation; and that the manager was here in the city, and had all the plans. I was to see him this afternoon and get a full understanding of it. When I saw that Miss Edith was interested, I called him up by telephone, and asked him to bring the plans here. I am expecting him every minute. There!" concluded Bennie,

going over and giving Dick a thump on the back, "I feel as if I had thrown up an elephant. I have made my confession. Am I to receive absolution?"

"Not until you have done the penance that I shall impose, when I get you alone," said Dick, mysteriously.

At this moment, the door bell rang.

"There! no doubt that is he now," said Edith.

The servant appeared with a card bearing the name in plain script—*Edwin Austin.*

"Show him in," said Bennie; and he went forward to meet him. Bennie was expecting to see a bustling, pushing fellow. On the contrary, Mr. Austin was a tall, stately man with iron-gray hair. He was well but plainly dressed, and would have been an ornament to any drawing-room; for he had the manners of a Chesterfield.

Bennie introduced Mr. Austin to Dick and Edith, and then said:

"We are somewhat interested in Mrs. Thornton's work, and she referred us to you."

"Yes, I had a letter from her requesting me to give you any and all information that you might desire. And I have brought the plans and diagrams of what we have done and what we hope to do," said Mr. Austin, glancing around for a place to display his maps.

"Will this table answer?" asked Edith, moving to a large table in the room.

"Perfectly," he replied; and they gathered around as he unrolled and spread out one of the plans for inspection.

[For an idea of this plan we refer the reader to the illustration.]

"Now this shows," began Mr. Austin, "what we have been experimenting upon. Five years ago this plan was worked out by Mrs. Thornton. Next to General Starkweather's land at Mabelthorp is the estate of Major Col-

ton. Mrs. Thornton showed him her plans for a community, and General Starkweather and he put up the land. Major Colton also put up a large sum of money for the improvements. They laid it out in ten-acre farms in this sort of a wedge-shape,"—referring to the diagram.

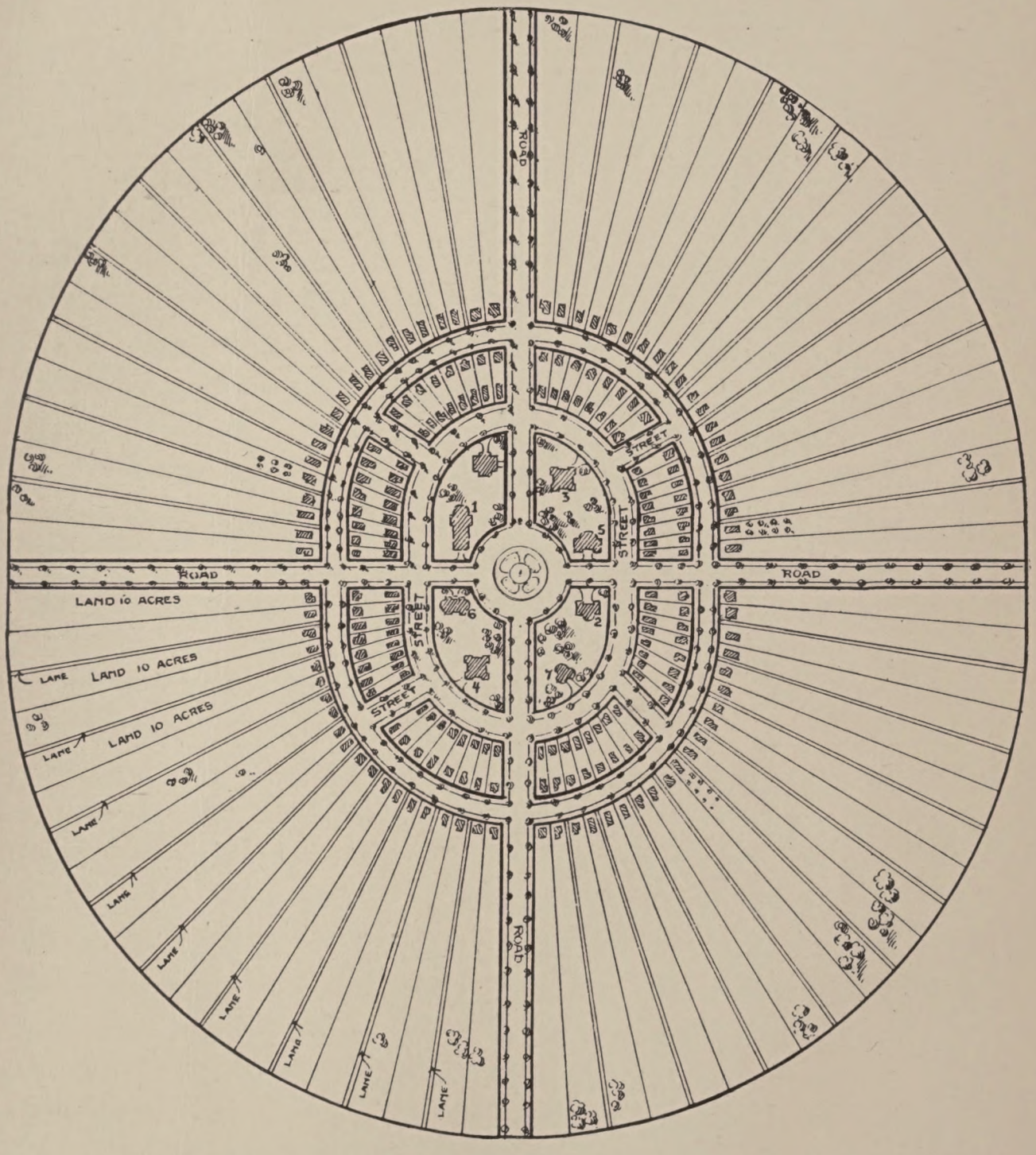
"The houses were built on this portion of the plot,"—again referring to the diagram—"which brings them all in a row, close together, and fronting on this street. The land is divided by fences and roads. In this one that we have now in operation, there are two hundred families.

"This central plot is divided into four parts by the streets cutting through it. Directly in the center, where the streets cross, is a fountain. No. 1 is a Catholic Church, No. 2, a Protestant Church. Nos. 3 and 4 are school-houses. No. 5 is a building that contains library, gymnasium, and large lecture-room, which has a stage for dramatic performances. There are other smaller rooms used for various purposes. No. 6 is a building that has a kindergarten, sewing-rooms, and class-rooms for cooking-schools and other uses. No. 7—this little building standing by itself—is a hospital. Now, you see the central plot has a street encircling it; and this double row of houses between the central plot and the houses on the land are for shops and residences for the people who do not farm.

"There is always a good supply of books, papers, and teachers to instruct the people how to obtain the best results from whatever they are engaged in producing.

"Now, the man who takes this land is supposed to buy it. You just give him the start by putting him where he can earn and pay for it, instructing him how to do it. You charge him the actual cost and a very small rate of interest.

"Now this is what we hope to do," said Mr. Austin,


ROAD
STREET
STREET
ROAD
ROAD
LAND 10 ACRES
LANE
LAND 10 ACRES
LANE
LAND 10 ACRES
STREET
STREET
ROAD
LANE
LANE
LANE
LANE
LANE
LANE
1
2
3
4
5
6
7

spreading another diagram on the table. "But you will see it is practically the same, only on a larger scale, and it will require a large sum of money to promote it."

"Have you been with the community long?" asked Dick.

"I have been interested in it from the inception," he replied.

"Do you consider it a success?"

"It is by far the most successful project of the kind that I have ever known or tried. It seems that for years Mrs. Thornton had a desire to give people permanent help. Temporary aid seemed to be almost wasted. After much thought, she conceived this plan. You see, it brings them all together as in a village, and there becomes quite a rivalry in keeping their homes in order, and in seeing who can produce the most, and pay for their place first. Then, in this way, they are all so near the churches and schools, there is no excuse for remaining away."

"What do these people raise?" asked Edith.

"Principally vegetables, chickens, melons and small fruits for the New York market.

"One man that came out there had a family of six children. He was an Italian. In the old country he had been a florist. He came here and he could not get anything to do, and he had no influence, and no one to help him. He said if he could raise violets he could do well. We fitted him up for violet culture. He raised violets for the New York market; besides many other things on the balance of his land. His children were all industrious. In three years he paid for the land, and at the end of the fifth year had saved quite a nice little sum of money. He sold his place back to the company, and has taken his family and has gone west where he can get more land. This man, besides getting a start, was a

great benefit to the community. His habits of thrift and economy were good examples, and he gave instruction freely at all times in all kinds of flower-culture. Yet, when he brought his family to this community, everything they possessed could have been put on a hand-cart.

"Quite a good many have paid for their places, and a few have done as our Italian friend—sold their places back and gone where they can get more land. But others are so attached to the place, you could hardly induce them to leave. Women that were sickly and prematurely old, have grown young living where the air is pure. It makes not only a living for those that can farm, but for the small dealers and trades-people. The country farmers all come down to the community, now, and patronize those stores."

"And what do you do with those places that have been sold back?" asked Bennie.

"We put some one else right into them and let the work go on."

"And has Mrs. Thornton done all this?" asked Edith.

"Practically, yes. Although she never says much about it, yet she worked out and promoted the entire plan. She consults Judge Thornton and the general; but they rarely make any changes. She does not claim the project is perfect yet; and there are constantly new developments that she thinks advantageous.

"She is now in hopes of being able to interest people enough to start a number of communities, and so get thousands of families out of the overcrowded districts and into the west where land is cheap. She and Judge Thornton traveled over a number of states this spring, looking for favorable localities. They were particularly struck with Texas. The climate is mild, the land fertile. Two crops a year can be raised, and fine artesian water

can be had. Communities can be established there at a small cost, comparatively speaking. So far, she has solicited nothing. The people that have put up the money have offered to do it. You see, it is not the same as giving charity. It's a sort of endless chain. It's just as you would invest in any business and wait for the return. One can let the money do the work over and over again, or they can withdraw it as it comes in."

"By Jove! It's a great scheme," said Bennie.

"You speak of Texas. Isn't that too far away from the markets?" asked Dick.

"By no means. With our present railway facilities for shipping, there is no difficulty. Besides shipping their products they can establish 'canneries' for fruits and vegetables. They raise the finest grapes there, and the yield is enormous.

"One of the most sucessful things yet tried is the raising of strawberries. Mrs. Thornton happened to know of Henry Rolman, the New Jersey strawberry king. So, she visited him, and placed a man with him to learn his methods of cultivating strawberries. This humane man became very much interested in the community, and gave not only all the information possible, but even made pilgrimages to Goluckie to give personal advice, and furnished thousands of plants at a nominal cost. The first two years the yield was great; but as nothing compared to the past three years, and though not up to Mr. Rolman's standard, yet the crops have been fabulous. Goluckie is now beginning to be famed for its strawberries, melons and other small fruits and vegetables. They are now cultivating a tomato that grows upon a trellis that is wonderful in its yield, and takes up a very little space.

"There is not an impossible thing about the whole

scheme; and that is why Mrs. Thornton has worked so hard to keep it from the newspapers until it had been thoroughly demonstrated. The majority have now paid for their own homes, and they are proud of it, too, I can tell you.

"There are millions and millions of dollars wasted every year in giving temporary relief to the poor, keeping up immense charitable societies and various organizations bound by red tape. People of any pride, or delicacy, never apply for charity until all else has failed, and they are absolutely starving. And before they can run the gamut of red tape of the charity organization they usually do starve. This same money, if properly expended, would give these same poor a chance to earn a home and make themselves respecting and independent. A home of one's own is a stimulus to good citizenship. Mrs. Thornton's idea is to permanently relieve their condition. There are many people who have saved a few dollars, and would gladly go to a place of this kind if the way were opened up for them. You could hardly believe it possible that the people in this community today were the same miserable creatures of five years ago. Some one remarked to Mrs. Thornton that she would have a lot of missionary work to do. She replied:

" 'Let these people get out of the city where the air and sunshine can do the missionary work. When *these* get into their hearts and lives you will see that they are human, and that is what they need.'

"And she was right. From the haggard, pale, ill-kept people that hardly looked human, they have grown into healthy, neat, well-kept citizens, a credit to themselves and to those that have helped them.

"She always speaks of her work as if it were a sort of pleasure. Yet to my personal knowledge, in starting this

movement she practiced much self-denial and economy in order to do it.

"The day has never been too cold, too hot, nor too wet for her to go to Goluckie, if needed, or if any one was in trouble there. I believe if she were in China and she felt they needed her at Goluckie she would start for home at once. I saw her one night, here in New York, all dressed for a grand ball. I never saw her look so beautiful. I had come in town to consult the general. I happened to mention that a child at Goluckie was not expected to live until morning. It was the only child of a man and woman of the most ordinary type; but they were devoted to it and were distracted. As soon as I told her she rushed out of the room to the judge, declaring she *must* go to Goluckie. He looked at the time-table and found they would have just twenty minutes to reach the station. How they both got out of ball attire and into street garb, and to the station in so short a time I can't tell. But they did; and she left me to send a trained nurse down. It was a bitter, cold night, but she did not mind it. The child got well.

"That is only an illustration of what her devotion to those people has been for five years. It is needless to say that she is simply worshiped—positively adored. Judge Thornton and the general are both looked upon by those people as the two greatest men in the world. But Mrs. Thornton is their queen."

Mrs. Thornton and Goluckie were themes that Mr. Austin evidently was fond of; for he continued:

"She watches every step of progress these people make. She knows just who are getting on and who are not, and she will have a word of encouragement, and, in a quiet way, she will help those that become discouraged. At first, she spent days with these people until they got

started. The general did the same, and he and Judge Thornton talked to the men evenings, and taught them games. General Starkweather delivers a course of lectures every year, with stereoptican views. Mrs. Thornton talks and visits among the women. She is, without doubt, a remarkable woman. She has an intuitive knowledge I never saw equaled. If any one has a genius or a talent for anything, she will find it out and give him an opportunity to use it. She has fitted more than a dozen girls, that belong to the settlement, for teachers, by putting them into schools in Clinton. She fitted up a cottage at Mabelthorp, and put these girls in it, with the widowed mother of one of them to look after them. There was one family that moved out there that had a son twelve years old. The boy did not care for work, and he was the pest of the place, drawing ships and boats of all kinds with pieces of chalk or charcoal on fences, houses, or anything he could find to sketch on. Mrs. Thornton found it out and visited his mother, who said she had been tried almost to the verge of insanity with the boy; that he would run away to the wharf in the city and spend his whole time there marking up everything. She said she had whipped him and it had done no good. Mrs. Thornton sent for the boy and had a talk with him. She told him if he would promise to sketch only on the paper she gave him, she would send him all the pencils and paper he would want. Of course, the child was delighted. In a few weeks' time she took all his drawings to Mr. Le Mars, the marine painter. He pronounced them wonderful and declared the boy had the bold strong hand of a master. She made arrangements for him to take lessons from Mr. Le Mars. He took two lessons a week for two years, remaining at Goluckie. For the past two years he has stayed in town and has been in Le Mars's studio, and bids fair

to make one of the most famous marine painters of the day. He is already making lots of money—and a name."

"You don't mean young Morlotti, the Italian, that had the large marine canvas at the Spring Exhibition?" exclaimed Bennie.

"That is the very young man. His parents lived down in the slums. They are people of very ordinary intellect, very good, very honest; but that's all. They tried to whip this talent out of the boy. And, at first, they rather thought Mrs. Thornton was ruining him. But they felt through her they had gotten out of their wretched condition; and so, she had her way with the boy. Now, they are very proud of him. He was not a pretty boy. He had a heavy face and was not a favorite. He has now grown quite handsome; and he simply adores Mrs. Thornton. It was through her that his picture was sold this spring. He is now painting another that is most promising; and if he can dispose of it for a fair figure he will then have enough money to go abroad for a few years."

"I will buy that picture," said Edith.

"If you change your mind, let me know," said Dick.

"She discovered another boy who was eternally whittling and cutting and trying to rig up all kinds of machinery. She put him into a shop in the city with a very fine machinist, and he is making great progress.

"And so it goes. These are merely a few instances. You have all seen that handsome office-boy of Judge Thornton's. He is one of the Goluckie boys, and his great ambition is to be a lawyer.

"She discourages gifts to these people or charity of any kind. She has a way of saying before them:

"'O, they don't want anybody to *give* them anything. They want to pay for what they get. They are independent. Of course they don't want to pay big prices.

But they want to feel that they have earned what they have.' And it is wonderful the effect it has. They have learned the difference between a present and charity; and they resent charity. She works on their pride. There were some of these people that had been so unfortunate as to be compelled to accept charity until they had gotten used to it. But Mrs. Thornton said we must eradicate that, or their children would be like them, and we don't want to be instrumental in bringing up that kind of people.

"Religiously, there is but one thing she urges; and that is Universal Brotherhood. Her personal religion is an inspiration; yet it does not interfere with what any one believes. The ministers declare down there that they believe just as she does. She has been teaching auto-suggestion, or how to keep well; and you would be surprised to see how these people have grasped the idea, and how little sickness there is. This little village is only a few miles from Clinton, and there is a perfect stream of carriages going out there every Sunday, and in the evenings. People stop for berries and fruit, and they know they will get the best.

"The people at Goluckie take the greatest pride in keeping everything ready to be seen. You can't go into any like number of country homes and see the perfection you see there. It has been an incentive to the whole country around, and has stimulated the farmers to better work.

"There are but few obligations to be taken on going there, and I am sure you could never guess what they are. So I shall tell you: No child is allowed to be whipped, not even one blow from the parents, on pain of dismissal from the community. And all mothers have to have special care under the same penalty. Idleness and drunkenness are not tolerated, and you will be surprised to know that

there has been no trouble from the last two offenses. But with the first two there was some trouble. People have a way of cuffing children. It becomes a habit. They do it without thinking; and that was the most dreadful thing to Mrs. Thornton. She had a perfect horror of it. She declared she would not be instrumental in assisting to bring up children through fear. And, as for the care of mothers, these people had never heard of such a thing. They did not know what it meant. The effort and success of Mrs. Thornton in bringing about desired results in those two matters is very interesting history, which I would advise you to look into sometime. You will find it marvelous food for reflection," said Mr. Austin as he rolled up his plans, and rising, continued:

"I believe that is all the information I am able to impart to you at present. If at any future time I can serve you I shall be most happy. You know my address."

Edith gave him her hand, and thanking him, said graciously:

"You will surely hear from us again. I am much impressed by what you have told us."

He shook hands with the gentleman, bowed, and made his exit.

"What an elegant old gentleman and what perfect manners! I wish some one would tell me how Mrs. Thornton manages to secure the services of such people," said Edith. "Did you ever see her secretaries? They each have the manners of a duchess."

"It's another one of her problems that I am not able to solve. But now tell me, What is your next move?" questioned Dick.

"I hardly know," replied Edith.

"I move we all go down to the Springs to-morrow morning," said Bennie, "and consult Mrs. Thornton."

"You would better call her up by telephone," said Dick, "and tell her we have seen Mr. Austin, and see what she suggests."

They were soon in communication with Mary, and after some little talk, it was decided that they should meet her at Mabelthorp the following day and all go with her to visit the Goluckie community. She said she would bring Pansy and Annie Barry with her, and they were all to remain three days. They would also visit Bennie's land.

This being satisfactory, they arranged to meet at the train the next morning, and Bennie and Dick took their departure. They had not gone far when Bennie stepped into a drug-store for some cigars, and left Dick standing on the sidewalk. At that moment, Mrs. Brandt, who was driving past, saw Dick and stopped to speak to him. Dick was a great favorite of hers, and she at once began to tell him that she was worried about Edith. She had not intended to tell this fashionable club man everything, and she was quite astonished when he laughingly told her he knew all about it, and said:

"Don't worry, Mrs. Brandt. Your daughter has just had a long, sensible letter from Mrs. Thornton, who will never advise her to do anything that will make her absurd or ridiculous. If I had a sister I would put her into the hands of Mrs. Thornton without a question. We are all going down to Mabelthorp, to-morrow, to meet Mrs. Thornton. It's only a fad, and will absorb Miss Edith temporarily. You need have no fear. She will go to Newport all right."

Mrs. Brandt was overjoyed to hear this; for Edith had shown so much determination that it had given her no little anxiety. When she entered her home she met Edith, who said, as she laid Mary's letter in her hands:

"I am going down to Mabelthorp in the morning, if

you don't object. Mrs. Thornton will be there, also Pansy."

"I shall be glad to have you go," said Mrs. Brandt, as they separated; each a little surprised at the softened manner of the other.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DICK, DONALD AND BENNIE VISIT THE TENEMENT DISTRICT.

It turned out to be one of those awfully sweltering hot days that sometimes come in June. Dick and Bennie had turned into the Astoria. There they found Donald. After a little chat, and some cooling drinks, Dick astonished Bennie and Donald with the announcement that he was going to go down into the tenement quarters and visit his houses. They at once proposed accompanying him. Ordering an open cab they started.

Of all the days in the year this was most fitting to see that quarter at its very worst. It was the first intense heat of the season, and it had driven every one to the streets and windows for a breath of air. There were pallid women and children, gasping from exhaustion. The place was alive with them. Children were swarming on the sidewalks, doorsteps, windows and fire-escapes—some laughing, more cursing and swearing; some too dejected to do either. They took a policeman into the cab, and driving to one of the largest and best tenement houses, they entered, followed by an army of curious, half-starved, pathetic children that the policeman had to drive back in order to keep the passage from being choked.

They went to the top of the house, peered down nar-

row airshafts, and into rooms that were like dungeons. The unspeakable and ghastly stenches and the filth were frightful. It was a glimpse straight down into Gehenna. They went into several buildings. They were the best in the district; yet they were all horrible. The houses were not so bad, but they were overcrowded, badly ventilated, and unkept.

In two rooms they found a family of nine persons, the mother sick in bed, a wan, wasted creature with a babe at her breast.

In less than two hours she was in a clean bed in a hospital, and her children in the hands of a relief committee. When the father came home at night he found the rooms vacated.

It is no use to describe all that was to be seen. Those that have witnessed such sights know just what they are. To those who never saw them no pen can draw the picture with sufficient vividness; for a pen cannot show you a genuine sigh, a tear, the hectic flush, nor the consumptive cough, the muttered curse, nor the drunken leer.

As they came from one of the houses out into the street, a dreadful commotion had taken place in a house opposite. Two men had got into a fight as to which of them should occupy the fire-escape. They both had been drinking, and it resulted in one stabbing the other, and ended in one being sent to the hospital, presumably to die, the other to jail; and the end for him would be, most likely, the electric chair—and all for what? Because they had not a decent place to live in. They were men that worked at night and they had no place to get a moment's peaceful rest, and they were mad for want of sleep.

Dick made inquiries and learned that they were both honest, hard-working men of their kind, and were not naturally quarrelsome.

The excitement had brought throngs of people. Dick always declared that there were a million children. They swarmed like flies, and it took some time to get through the throng and away.

When Dick and his companions started out in the afternoon they were supplied with well-padded pocket-books. When they returned they were penniless. They drove up to Dick's Fifth Avenue house, and the three took dinner together.

Dick telephoned for his agent, who soon made his appearance, and he had a long interview with him.

Bennie always declared that Dick spent the night at the telephone calling up and interviewing people, from the mayor down to the alderman of the district. At any rate, he at last got into communication with the heads of some relief committees, and sent some very explicit orders for relief in certain quarters.

"Just think if Miss Edith had been there," said Bennie.

"It makes me shudder to think of it," replied Dick.

"Did you ever hear such cursing and swearing?—the women scolding and the children crying," said Bennie.

"There is work there for the Salvation Army," said Donald.

"My God! do you think so?" exclaimed Dick. "I don't. If I had to live like that I'd swear too. I shall always remember that sight. It is my conception of what hell must be. Mrs. Thornton is right. It is *we* that need missionary work. Thank heaven that that man was not stabbed in my house. I feel, now that I have seen and know the condition of affairs, that I would be held responsible for every oath if I did not remedy it so far as lies in my power. Do you know, if I were doing missionary work, I mean in a religious sense, I could never

have the face to go into dens like those and ask the people to become better. My God! I wonder they do not rise like wolves and devour us who hoard up millions. The very fact that they do not, shows that there must be good in them."

"And when war comes," said Donald, "our armies are recruited from these same people. And that shows they are not cowards. But what is to be done? This is not the first time I have thought on these subjects; and I have given and given in charity, but I have yet to see any good results from it."

"So have I given. So has Bennie," said Dick. "I don't know that I ever refused when any one came to me for money for charitable purposes; but that was all we did do. We gave money and never thought of it again. But I begin to see that Mrs. Thornton is right; that it is largely the fault of the rich."

"And yet," replied Donald, "a few days ago, when some one made a remark about the selfishness of the rich, she took it up at once. She said that while there was much apathy among the rich, hardly any one realized how much is given to the poor by the rich. Then she said: 'Go to the homes of the poor on Christmas, New Year's, Easter, or on the Fourth of July, and see the gifts that are poured in at these times by people with loving hearts who are anxious to share with the less fortunate.' Then she mentioned the immense sums of money raised in times of need, in famine and blizzards, and added, 'If you look into it you will find that the rich are far from selfish.'"

"We are selfish, though," said Bennie. "She always wants to be just. You can't get her to cry down any one. She gives, but she looks after it and sees to it that it does some good. *There* is where we are selfish; we don't do it, by Jove!"

"Well," laughed Dick, "I feel as if in some way I had gotten myself all mixed up lately, and especially to-day. I'm really in a muddle. I think I know very little about charity, and would rather drop the burden on some one else's shoulders. I promise myself, though, to remedy the conditions in my own tenements at once. And I promise to give to Miss Edith and Mrs. Thornton *carte blanche* to my check book for any of their projects. But beyond that I don't think I have any talent for this kind of thing. I should rather be excused. With Miss Edith I think it's merely a fad that will soon blow over when she again gets into society. At present, she is overwhelmed with gratitude at Pansy's recovery."

"I don't know," said Donald. "I confess I have been greatly impressed by Mrs. Thornton and her methods."

"So have I," said Dick, "chiefly for this reason: She has not aspired to oddity nor made a nondescript of herself, nor shut herself off from every one; nor has she done any weird or uncanny thing. On the contrary, she is simply natural. She is gay, good company, looks after her home, her husband, and child. She arranges all her outside affairs at hours when Charles is not at home. Her household moves like well-oiled machinery. She would make a marital wilderness blossom."

"In speaking of her last night to my mother," said Donald, "I was surprised at the view she took of it. She said, 'You must remember, Donald, that this is not a man-made theory. I believe implicity in everything Mrs. Thornton does. It is the Christian religion, pure and simple, as revealed by Christ Himself, nothing more, nothing less. The various books floating about are simply man's opinions. Mrs. Thornton's only guide is the Bible. All her methods are wholly embodied in the teachings of Christ. It is not dreamy Orientalism, but the Western

religion we have always had, and which has been preached to us always. She puts a literal construction on it instead of figurative. That is all.' My mother has the greatest admiration for Mrs. Thornton, and thinks her the grandest woman she ever knew; and Annie worships her. And as I am fond of both of them, I am bound to partake of their admiration. But I'm going to say 'good night,' and I will be on time in the morning."

CHAPTER XXIX.

A VISIT TO GOLUCKIE.

MARY was delighted to welcome them to Mabelthorp, the next day. When Dick and Bennie told her how they happened in on Edith, she laughed and said:

"Mental telegraphy. The vibrations of her mind went out to yours. Thoughts are things, you know, and you caught her thought and responded."

It was a gay party that drove over to Goluckie the next afternoon. And it was a surprise party after they arrived. The little village was certainly an oasis, with its clean streets, green trees, and V-shaped strips of cultivated land. Dick declared it looked like an intricate mosaic.

The cottages had originally all been alike, three-gabled, two rooms above and three below, and painted white, with green blinds. To the majority of them had now been added two or more rooms and a porch; and some had been painted some other color than white. Nearly all of them were well covered with vines and surrounded with trees and flower gardens; all were in perfect condition. There were no broken fences nor gates on one hinge.

They made a complete circuit of the little village before alighting, Mary pointing out many spots of interest. Then

they left the carriages and inspected the buildings. They went into the schools, churches, library, gymnasium, sewing school and cooking school, where they were treated to an impromptu lunch.

What struck the visitors most was the expression of absolute adoration on the faces of every one for Mary. She seemed to know every one, and to be able to call them by name, and to have a word for each.

They went into the lecture-room, at the end of which was a stage. They sat down for a rest and Mary said:

"You see, in this way we can concentrate everything, making it easy for the most delicate mothers and young children to take advantage of all that is going on; and being so near, it is a stimulus to one another to do their best. They all have about the same start, and it's wonderful how they try to help one another."

Dick, Bennie and Donald were loud in their praises, and they all expressed their great surprise at the perfection and completeness of it all.

"Now," said Edith, "we have grown very curious, and have been wondering where you obtained your corps of teachers; for all this instruction requires trained minds."

"My dear Edith," replied Mary, "if I should tell you you could hardly believe it; but as we are on a tour of investigation for facts, I suppose I must. At first it was a problem that gave me some anxiety; but I concluded not to worry about it, and see if it would not solve itself. And it did. We felt that proper food and cleanliness should be the first requirements; that these people should know how to cook their simple food properly, and that they should be taught frugality. I found an old Frenchman that had been cook in a French hospital for years. He was lame and could not do much; but he understood how to cook hygienically, and was able to instruct others.

We put him at once in charge of the cooking school department. His wife had been a trained nurse in the hospital in France. She was too old to do regular work, but she understood nursing; and with the help of her daughter, whom she has trained, she has charge of our little hospital, where all our Goluckie children are born. As you have already seen, the hospital is a model.

"A little queer old doctor, but with a world of sense, we made inspector of the homes. At first he made the rounds daily; now once a week is sufficient.

"An old Welshman, who has a voice like a de Reszke and as true, has charge of the singing school. He works all day. He is a natural born singer and instructor. His happiest moments are when drilling his classes and showing them off in the choirs on Sundays. And there are some really fine voices.

"We have a lively, funny, little Frenchman, who jumps round like a cricket. He is our dancing master. He attends to his business, a little dry goods shop, through the day, and teaches dancing in the evening. There were any number of splendid seamstresses who were capable of teaching others. So, it was not difficult to establish a sewing school.

"Among these people are some natural musicians, and we have a very creditable band that meets certain nights for practice. There is also a dramatic club, now, and as you see, they have here quite a respectable little stage with a number of scenes painted by some one of themselves. For I would have you know that these people, though deadly poor, almost starving, were not all ignorant. They only lacked opportunity. The priest, who has charge of the Catholic Church, and the Protestant minister, were sent us from the city churches. They also have charge of and work in the schools. At first we hired

several teachers. Now, some of the community girls have been trained as teachers, and the places are filled by them. We have a man with us who was once a presiding judge—a man of superior education. And his wife is a refined, cultivated, capable woman. He was run over by a wagon and so badly injured that he had to have his foot amputated. And they kept losing until they had nothing left. They had one daughter whose husband was killed in an explosion. She was very delicate and the shock killed her. She left two children, boys, for these old people to provide for. They were absolutely starving when we brought them here. The children were wonderfully brainy little fellows. The eldest was in his thirteenth year. Their only teachers had been their grandparents. The old judge has been invaluable in this community. He talks well, and every winter gives a course of lectures. He is a splendid disciplinarian, and he teaches in the school, and the elder boy is now an assistant. Both boys are now reading law with their grandfather. And their grandmother has grown handsome. She is the *grande dame* of the community, and it was through her that the kindergarten was organized. She also teaches young girls many useful things.

"Some of these people have developed a wonderful amount of genius. Take, for instance, the cottage to the right. You all spoke of its artistic beauty, as we drove into the community. That family numbered ten, and a cottage of five rooms was rather small in the summer. That man built a dining-room and kitchen out of the merest scraps. He first put the posts down and made a rough framework of any kind of bits of boards he could find, and of dry goods boxes. Then he and the children gathered twigs and branches in the woods, and nailed them on in the artistic manner that you noticed. He

gathered old fruit cans, melted them and got the tin for the roof, and painted it. This roof has stood the weather, perfectly, for four years. He lined the inside walls with cloth and papered them. You spoke of the fence. He built it from stones and pebbles that he and his children gathered from their land. His doing this started the rest, and you have seen the results. You see, these things become contagious.

"We had one man, a down-east Yankee who could handle tools. He made his kitchen and dining-room into perfect gems of convenience, cupboards, closets, and shelves galore. That was the beginning of beautifying the kitchens. They often exchange work, and in this way they can be of great assistnace to one another.

"We take pains to see that they get materials cheaply, and encourage them as much as possible in all they undertake. When one starts in to do a thing they all watch for the result. It is a great incentive.

"You see, every home has its little lawn and flower gardens. They are always striving for the best. I honestly believe they have so far advanced that they would consider it a disgrace to fail in not getting as good a yield from what they have as their neighbors; and the children are as ambitious, if not more so, than the parents.

"What I have told you gives you merely an idea of what these people have been able to do. You would be surprised at the real genius that has been developed. Some of them make a good deal of money out of things they make nights; and they are now beginning to do a great deal of sewing and making of fancy-work for the large stores in the city. Many ladies in Clinton are beginning to send all their white work out here, as we have developed some of the daintiest seamstresses.

"We have a perfect system of payments, small but suf-

ficient, for instructions received. Over all of these, and in supreme control, is Mr. Austin, whom you met yesterday. He is a man with few equals for excellent judgment, good government, charity, and kindliness of manner.

"Now, this is only a little synopsis of this community," said Mary, with a far-away look in her eyes. "But if you could know the majority of these people, of their little deeds of kindness, of the good that is in them; could you see, how in some, ambitions were renewed, in others born, in this hope of a home of their own; how hearts that were numb from cold neglect and suffering, began to stir and glow, and smiles kindled where tears have been, you would not then be surprised that our hearts are set upon pushing on this work. It was an experiment, but I feel it has been a successful one. It will only be a little while when they will have paid for everything and own the town themselves. It will not belong to some one else; but it will be their own, and the discipline through which they will have passed during these years, will enable them to conduct their own affairs.

"Now, we want to invest this money in another community, and on a somewhat larger and more improved scale. It is still a young movement, and will require the concerted efforts of those interested to bring it to the state of perfection we desire. We would like to do for every suffering soul; but, of course, that is impossible. The thing we try to do is this: When we take hold of a person we try to hold him up until he gets his feet on solid ground, and not let him slip back into the slough from which he has been dragged, to die or for some one else to pull out."

At this moment a bell began to ring.

"There!" said Mary, rising, "that is the six o'clock bell. I had no idea it was so late. We shall just have

time to reach home for dinner;" and she led the way out across a green plot of grass to their conveyances.

As they came into the broad drive at Mabelthorp, they saw Charles crossing the lawn. Dick, who had been silent for some time, said to Edith:

"I love to look at Thornton. His walk is positive poetry. It has the swing of a man with a sound body and one who is a stranger to pain and *ennui.*"

Edith glanced at Dick, who at that moment was the personification of *ennui* as he lounged indolently on the seat opposite, as she replied sarcastically, with slightly curling lip:

"What luxuriance of fancy! Really, was not it an effort for you to make such a long speech? Would it not be well for you, to look into his methods for perfecting himself? It might wake you up a bit. You are too indolent for anything."

"Thanks awfully," drawled Dick. "I shall take your advice and interview him on the subject."

Edith was a spirited idol of society, and said what she liked. She had had her disappointment, and had been disillusioned in regard to one man; and judged them all alike. She had a train of admirers wherever she went, but she had little use for them, and least of all for Dick. He exasperated her beyond endurance by his nonchalance. She could not remember when she first met Dick. It seemed to her that she had known him always. In one way, she liked him; in another, she did not. She tried to goad him with keen satire and mischievous sophistries. But it was all to no purpose. He never got angry; he never seemed to care. Edith thought many times it would be a satisfaction if she could once rouse him sufficiently to get him into a temper. However, with all her sarcasm, Edith was a girl that interested one almost painfully.

You could hardly understand why. Dick watched her, noted her raven hair, and the violet eyes whose changing expression, within the past few days, had, at times, both startled and surprised him. Just at this moment Dick was not lethargic, as she supposed. The afternoon had made a great impression on him. He had been contrasting, in his mind, the sight of to-day with the hell of the tenement district. His mind was chaos if his body *was* calm. From that thought he had turned to quietly studying her. He was intensely artistic, and her rare, splendid beauty pleased him; and lounging on the seat opposite her he thought if Prometheus could touch her and give her a soul she would be perfect.

Dick was not in love with Edith, and he well knew he was a cipher she could substract from her life without loss. They were friends, royal friends, in the dance, the promenade, the drawing-room. Outside of that neither thought of the other. But as he sat there, his mind recalled an event of three years previous, when one of the men of Gotham's smart set became deeply interested in one of the "buds" of the season. To this man, so difficult to please, she was unusual. He watched her closely for weeks, and felt she was different from those he usually met. He determined to speak to her, to tell her of the interest she had awakened in him—an interest he had never felt for any woman before. He approached her late one night, at a ball. Unfortunately, she had at that moment an expression of utter weariness. She had danced night after night, for weeks, throughout the long, gay season. She was sleepy and cross and wished to go home. At last she arose and went to the cloak-room. When she emerged she was cloaked and hooded. She passed down the long stairs with a slow, listless tread. The gentleman awaited her. The glowing,

eager look in his face died away as he watched her descend with wearied air; and he silently, and without a word, offered her his arm and led her out, down the steps, across the strip of crimson carpet, to her carriage, into which she stepped and sank wearily back among the cushions. Still silent, he reached out his hand and took hers for a brief instant and pressed it lightly. There was no response. He dropped it, stepped back, the carriage door shut with a slam and the horses sped away into the night.

He shrugged his shoulders and muttered: "Soulless, a thing of wax, moulded and calloused already by this life we all lead."

He entered his carriage, and was soon in his rooms, where he resolved to forget her entirely.

Soon after she went abroad, and rumors reached him that she had vanquished an English duke and was soon to be a bride. This news saddened him a little, for he knew this duke and of his morganatic wife and several children. Had not his own sister eaten her heart out under like conditions?

"They sell their birthright for a mess of pottage," he muttered; then yawned and went to his club and tried to forget all about it.

Then Madame Rumor announced that the wedding was off; that the prospective bride had changed her mind and was returning to America.

Had she heard of the morganatic marriage and rebelled? He did not know.

He met her again in society. She was far more beautiful than ever. He approached her with some curiosity. She greeted him kindly, but she was ice. She had grown imperious, haughty, and there was a look in her eyes he never had seen before, almost like one haunted by a

specter. It awakened in him a strange sympathy. Her conversation was interspersed with the finest, keenest satire. Every word seemed to be a covert sneer when talking to gentlemen. He felt it. It chilled him. He lost all interest in her save as a society friend.

And she? Well, she had never given him a thought beyond a drawing-room acquaintance. When she met this duke she did not think of his title. He was handsome, cultured, distinguished, and he made the most ardent professions of attachment. In her heart she believed him endowed with every noble attribute, and she loved him sincerely and truly; loved him as a man and for what she believed him to be. She had been wounded when he began to talk about settlements; and when, by accident, she learned of the morganatic marriage, she was both shocked and horrified. Then she began to realize it was not love for her, but the many millions she would inherit that attracted him. She had the strength and good sense, in spite of the protestations of loyalty from his grace, to break the engagement at once, and put the ocean between them. But having truly loved this man, it had left its impression.

The girl was Edith Brandt. The man that had watched and studied and fancied, at one time, he loved her, was Richard Braintree.

CHAPTER XXX.

A VISIT TO BENNIE'S LAND.

On the morrow they set out to visit Bennie's land. It was delightfully cool. Donald declared the day was specially created perfect for their benefit. It was a pleasant little journey by rail. They had telegraphed for carriages, that met them at the station of a village on the outskirts of Bennie's land, of which there were nearly three thousand acres, cut up into farms, part of it under cultivation and part not. It was well located, well watered, and easy of access to one of the main railway lines between Philadelphia and New York, giving access to two of the best markets for produce.

Mary was happily disappointed in the land. It was so much superior to what she had expected from what Bennie had told her. She had made quite a study of these things, and her quick eye soon took in the possibilities, and she began pointing out the great advantages, and what could be done and how to do it. Donald was quick to grasp her ideas, and made some excellent suggestions that were afterward acted upon. Mary showed them wherein the land was equal if not superior in its advantages to that of Goluckie. Bennie was delighted and ca-

pered about like a child. Dick woke up. Mary was enthusiastic, and Edith, Pansy and Annie seemed to catch her spirit, and they all began to be very merry as they drove from point to point. They dispensed with ceremony and laughed and sang and played pranks like children. Pansy was happiest of all. It was the first day's outing she had enjoyed for over a year. She never had been formally brought "out," and had not seen a great deal of society; but she was now to be presented the coming season. Edith and her mother still looked upon Pansy as a little girl, although she was nineteen years old. She was certainly very witching, childlike, and capricious, one moment roguishly mischievous, the next demurely serious. The golden rings of her hair were clinging to her forehead. At times, her dark liquid eyes seemed melting; again, such a saucy, coaxing expression would dance into her face, and her lips always seemed begging for a kiss.

Donald had never seen much of Pansy until the last few days. Now, he covertly watched her, and when the whole battery of her smiles, curls, and dimples was brought to bear upon him, he actually began to betray symptoms of heart disease.

There were several fine gardens and orchards on the land. They raided cherry trees and pilfered strawberries. They came to a little spring that was pouring from a spout beneath a rock into a little pool below. At the sight and sound of the water they all became thirsty, and while others were trying to improvise cups out of leaves, Edith forgot her dignity and in a frolicsome mood made a cup of her hands and drank. Then, offering it to Dick he drank, as he knelt on the grass that was soft and elastic; and he swore that the cup was alabaster and the water nectar. And what he failed to drink she wickedly poured on his head. And when she exclaimed at the sight of

some beautiful wild flowers on a high rock above, he risked his neck to secure them for her. She watched him in some surprise. Could this be Dick, molluscan Dick?

They all left the spot with regret, Dick saying to Edith:

"This place will always be sacred to me, a sort of shrine. I think I shall buy it and build a temple here for periodical retreats where I can meditate on my sins."

"Do," said Edith, "you need it."

Edith was accustomed to hearing oceans of such talk, and the only impression it made upon her was surprise that he had the energy to say silly things. She knew it was social not heart sentiment.

Edith had been delegated to find a name for the new community, and it was puzzling her a good deal, as she was trying to think how she could connect the names of the three promoters in it.

At this moment she and Dick came up to where the rest were standing, ready to enter the carriages. They were having a dispute as to whether a certain point on a high rock was a part of the rock or a bird; Donald declaring it was a part of the rock.

"If I had a gun," declared Annie, "I could make that rock fly."

"Then it would be a *sham rock!*" exclaimed Pansy.

"There! I have it, I have it!" exclaimed Edith with much vehemence, and with such a look of exultation on her face, as of a great discovery, that the words of railery died away on the lips of those present, and they forgot their dispute and looked at her inquiringly.

"You have it?" repeated Pansy. "What is it? You look as if you had discovered the North Pole."

"Come, Edith," said Mary. "You see we are consumed with curiosity. What is it?"

"A name for the new colony, 'Shamrock,' three in one. Don't you see?"

A shout of laughter greeted her announcement. Dick doffed his hat and bid her the "top of the mornin'!" Donald began to dance an Irish jig, and Annie and Bennie to sing "Saint Patrick's Day in the Morning," beating an accompaniment with sticks on the carriage wheels; while Pansy was curtseying and declaring:

"It is a foin intellect she has altogether, to be afther thinking of sich an iligant name for the Oirish settlement."

Mary laughed at the frolic until the tears came. Edith stepped into the open carriage from which she made a speech, declaring she was entitled to a hearing from the august body. She stated she had puzzled her brain as to how she could incorporate the three names into one. The subject had been so ponderous she had grown pale and thin with the effort; and until a few moments ago had got no further than Benniedick. As she was bound to have a name, and though it would be a dreadful thing to do, still she had decided to kill Donald as the only way out of the difficulty. (Groans from the house.) Now that his life had been spared (loud applause), through this marvelous inspiration (more applause and cries of "Hear, hear, hear!") they had no appreciation.

She sat down with a very womanly pout on her lips and an air of offended dignity all over her, amidst shouts of applause and protestations to the contrary of her statement.

Dick constituted himself chairman and called the house to order. Donald made a touching speech, that is, he touched his eyes frequently with the back of his hand. Among other things, he said he had never been able to appreciate the story of Pocahontas and John Smith be-

fore. He finally sat down on the carriage steps, amidst groans, sobs and hisses from the audience.

Dick again called order and moved that the name of Shamrock be adopted for the new colony, and a vote of thanks be tendered Miss Brandt for her mighty mental effort. Mary seconded the motion; which being put before the house was carried unanimously by a standing vote. And happiness was restored, though Pansy declared it was a forced vote, as there was no place to sit down.

Bennie now announced that he was starving. And driving in the direction of a thick clump of trees, Donald exclaimed:

"'What light through yonder timber breaks?' It is a spread, ye gods, it is a spread!"

"Manna in the wilderness—a miracle, a miracle!" shouted Dick.

And sure enough, there was Dick's butler, with two assistants, and a feast fit for the gods already spread upon the grass. What rejoicing!

I propose we shall fittingly and gastronomicaly celebrate this occasion," said Bennie, as they settled themselves around the snowy cloth.

How they did eat! In the language of Dominie Sampson, their "appetites were prodigious." Jokes and stories were told, toasts were drunk, amid peals and shouts of laughter. They were merciless toward one another in their mirth and raillery.

Is it not strange how laughter becomes contagious, and sensible people laugh at the merest trifles? There was nothing very witty said or done, yet they laughed immoderately at the simplest things. The pessimists would have had no use for this crowd. They were *bon vivants*, pure and simple.

Suddenly Donald began to cough spasmodically, saying he had a bone in his throat, and declaring that he was dying.

"All right. Go right along and die, we won't disturb you," unfeelingly said Dick, as he continued to devour his food.

"No," said Annie, "we haven't time to save you now. We'll see you later."

"We will report it justifiable homicide," said Bennie, helping himself liberally to pressed chicken.

Pansy began to fan him with a tooth-pick, and Mary inquired sympathetically where the bone was. Donald gasped and declared he felt in it his œsophagus.

"What's that? In what part of your anatomy doth it lie?" asked Bennie, dropping his fork.

"Sack it and find out," came laconically from Dick, as he handed Donald the butter knife.

Edith proposed giving him an X-ray instead.

"How do you take them?" asked Pansy.

"His taste is delicate. Better put it in a capsule," replied Annie, as she nibbled at a chicken bone held daintily between her thumb and finger.

Mary offered him her vinaigrette with one hand, and a glass of wine with the other.

By this time Donald had recovered, and taking both the wine and vinaigrette declared to Mary she was the only one that had any sympathy, and that it was the second time to-day he owed his life to a woman.

"If you get up theatricals on short notice, or employ the services of an inquisitive bone to explore your throat, and at such inopportune moments, you mustn't expect sympathy from this crowd," remorselessly replied Annie. "Even our hands are too busy to respond with applause."

She verified this, at the moment, by having both hands

occupied dissecting some intricate, delicious looking mystery on her plate.

"This is what I call a royal spread," said Mary.

"So it is," assented Annie.

"Let us found a Gordon-Barry-Braintree Kingdom in honor of the occasion," said Pansy; "and the Shamrock shall be the crest emblazoned on the coat-of-arms for this illustrious house."

A shout of applause followed this suggestion, whereat Pansy arose and made a sweeping curtsey in acknowledgment.

"How brilliant! For originality the Brandts hold the ace of trumps to-day," said Bennie.

By this time, as Donald put it, the hunger was gradually disappearing from their faces. Edith made a wreath and placed it on Dick's head, saying:

"Unlike Cæsar on the Lupercal he does not wave away the crown."

But Pansy dubbed him Apollo, and gave him the top of a basket for a lyre, at which Dick begged Edith to strike that they might, for once, hear true music. But she declared to his Olympian splendidness that there was no note that could bring forth *truth* from the Braintree *lier*.

"Ah, woe is me!" exclaimed Dick. "Even my veracity is most insiduously attacked. Have pity, carrissima; don't be so merciless. Can't you come to my rescue, Mrs. Thornton?"

"Your only hope is in patience and the final triumph of justice," laughed Mary.

"Oh, spare your sympathy!" cried Edith; "he is not wounded. He is a modern Achilles and has no vulnerable spot."

"Yes, I have," gaspingly replied Dick, sighing like a south wind.

Edith lifted her hands in protest, and exclaimed imporingly:

"Don't sigh like that, I beg of you. Some one might make a mistake and think you had a heart."

Dick picked up a small olive stiletto and meditatively contemplating it, replied, assuming a saddened tone of voice and shaking his head from side to side:

"Ah, these are the needle-pricks of life. This is the feminine incredulity that tries men's souls. The proud woe-man's contumely, for which Hamlet suggests the remedy of a bare bodkin."

"How deeply metaphysical and brilliant," said Edith mockingly. "Shall we attribute it to the champagne?"

"A better stimulant may be found nearer home," replied Dick, meaningly.

"That's not bad, Dick," laughed Mary, "although a little plain."

All this was a delightful change in Edith. She was playfully irresistible. Mary was glad to see it.

"Here! Give his Olympian faithfulness another paté. Perhaps it may keep him quiet," laughed Donald.

"It is a consummation devoutly to be wished," replied Edith, putting the paté on Dick's plate, who devoured it without replying.

"The very silence of some people is encouraging," said Edith, in a mocking tone of relief.

At this moment, Pansy's voice floated from the other side of the spread:

"Perhaps Mrs. Thornton is the Moses to lead us out of the wilderness."

"Moses who?" asked Bennie.

"Oh, Bennie! Didn't you ever read the Bible?" asked Annie.

"Oh, of course I have!" asserted Bennie confidently; "but when you spoke I wasn't thinking of the Bible. Of course I know Moses was one of the twelve apostles."

A shout of laughter greeted Bennie's declaration, and Mary said:

"Bennie, you have established yourself forevermore as a Bible student."

But it struck Dick as exceedingly funny, and he laughed hysterically, choking on the last morsel of the paté until he was almost black in the face. Donald began to thump him on the back, saying:

"It's now your turn to choke."

Bennie saw that he had made a mistake, and just at that moment he had no fancy for being made ridiculous. And there flashed into his mind one of the stories that he remembered reading when a child, that had something about Moses in it. Without premeditation he said:

"See how it affects Dick when the infant bull rushes. You see I was created to keep Dick from dying of torpor. Therefore I am compelled to exert myself."

As Dick pet name for Bennie was, *Mon enfant,* his slight allusion to bullrushes and infants got him gracefully out of the dilemma, and again Dick thought:

"He knows more than I gave him credit for."

They lingered long over the repast; then the gentlemen "did a smoke," Annie Barry lighting a match for Bennie, and holding it in her dainty fingers while he puffed away, trying to look in her eyes at the same time.

Annie had beautiful gray eyes, rather thoughtful, and a clear broad forehead with distinct, finely marked eyebrows. She had the warmest, purest heart, so like her big brother Donald.

The sky was sapphire, the clouds pearly white. The clump of trees was on a high piece of ground, and the little village could be seen in the distance. The sun was gleaming like gold in the west and gradually sinking to rest.

So many times we think life is barren of instincts for good when they are really only dormant; and need only persistent effort to wake them to life. But one must first possess these instincts before they can be used as a power for good.

Who can comprehend the influence of a woman like Mary, the measure of benefit such a soul as hers can be? So much lies in laughter; and they had laughed like children. They had forgotten forms and ceremonies, and were simply natural. Mary felt they needed just such a communion with nature to break up the purposeless existence which she was sure was disgusting some of them. For had not Bennie and Edith demonstrated it? She felt sure that hearts full of gushing tenderness were concealed under this frozen crust of conventionality; and she felt, now, as she looked at Edith, that she already was changed even in countenance. And as for Dick, how changed those habits that had almost become second nature to him. If this dormant nature could only assert itself! Perhaps it was not too late. She had been watching him all the afternoon, and began to be very hopeful of him.

The atmosphere was beginning to grow dreamy and poetic, and Mary divined what was most required, and did not hurry them. She had been in a dreamy reverie, and was now recalled by Donald's voice saying of some minister in Texas:

"Yes, his battle-cry was: 'Prepare to meet your Gawd.' He always gave me a pain. He was a regular old Bible-mauler—one of those smiling, smirking, hand-shaking cusses that you couldn't get rid of, and longed to kill."

"Yes!" exclaimed Annie, "and his wife was worse than he. She did missionary work, and she wore a petrified grin, and——"

"And a black bombazine dress with green strings cut bias," lucidly interrupted Donald.

"And they used to come to our house," continued Annie, "and you *should* have seen Donald! He could scent them a mile off. You would have thought he had hydrophobia." And her laughter rang out like silver bells. "They had an ungovernable affection for plum cake, puddings and pies that they could devour in incalculable quantities, although they always declared they 'dasn't' eat much."

"They must have been dreams," said Bennie.

"They were," replied Donald, "the kind that make you leave your bed and walk. I used to wish I was the inventor of nitro-glycerine or some other explosive. I would have taken care that there was an accident."

"She was *so* affectionate. She just adored Donald. He used to sigh for a lodge in some vast wilderness;" and Annie's merry laugh rang out again at the recollection.

"They were such awful bores. I would hate an archangel if he were a bore," declared Donald.

"That's the trouble," said Dick. "So few people are really congenial. They are bores in some shape, either as hypocrites, gossips, misers, or——"

"Something, something—always something," chimed in Bennie, as he lounged on the grass near Mary; and turning to her he said: "What is your honest opinion of mankind, Mrs. Thornton? I do not mean individually, but collectively, as a whole, the entire mass of humanity in common."

"If I were sitting on a high pinnacle and could survey the whole of mankind, I might become pessimistic,"

replied Mary. "But judging from my limited view I am very optimistic, and think there is much more good than bad in the world. She hesitated a moment and then continued thoughtfully:

"I sometimes look upon people as a vast body of ore taken from the mine. The ore looks dull and dark, and it seems impossible that it is of value; but we know there is value incrusted and imbedded in it, and that the gold and gems are there, and must be separated from the dross. Some of the ore may be refractory and hard to handle; and it depends upon the means that are used and the persistent efforts or desires of the extractors. But if the right method is followed, a rich reward is theirs, and they study the best methods. Emerson says that a man is like a bit of Labrador spar which has no lustre, as you turn it in your hand, until you come to a particular angle. Then it shows a deep and beautiful color. What you think of him depends so much on how you look at him."

"Then you think there is good in every one?" asked Donald.

"I do. We cannot all see alike. You might find it where I might not, and vice-versa. Our methods might be different. We must each take from life that which appeals most strongly to us; then it becomes a truth to us."

"I think in the light of what Mrs. Thornton has said that your arguments are becoming dull," said Edith.

"Which, I presume you mean as a mild hint that we'd better adjourn," answered Dick, rising.

They became enthusiastic over the gorgeous sunset and the serenely beautiful twilight.

Dick had one grand accomplishment. He could sing. His voice was a rich, deep baritone. He loved music and had cultivated his voice from pure love of it. And now Pansy began warbling like a bird, and Dick joined her;

and in a minute they were all singing. They were a congenial and friendly party, and as they drove back to the station there was no complaint of heat or fatigue or dust.

Annie wore a wreath of wild flowers on her hat that Bennie had artistically woven and placed there, and Pansy bore aloft a great branch from a cherry tree, black with cherries. Dick and Edith were silently enjoying the beauty of the evening. The cool twilight shadows were creeping grayly on. Somehow, Dick never forgot that day.

That night, Pansy put her arms around Edith and said as she kissed her:

"It has been the happiest day of my life."

That evening Mary and Edith had their first long and confidential talk. Edith had been wavering and doubting: one minute strong and hopeful, the next, weak, cynical and vacillating. She came away from Mary strengthened and resolute. She began to see things in a plain, practical way, as Mary saw them, and to see among other things where her work lay. Mary had said:

"One thing that has amazed and astonished me is how easy it is to influence men that I actually thought so sunk in social apathy that there seemed no hope for them. Can you not see, dear, what a field you have to work in? I often talk to Charles about it, and he sees it too."

Here, then, was Edith's work. She would influence those around her. She would study Mary's methods and follow them. She would do what her hands found to do. She had felt all the time that it was only a temporary spasm on the part of Dick, Bennie, and Donald; but she determined to try to make it enduring.

The next morning they all met in the library. Charles and Mr. Austin were there; and the whole plans for the new colony were thoroughly gone over, and matured with a celerity that was surprising.

Mary had suggested that Bennie and Dick take more time and think it over; and she had thought that when they saw the figures and found out the large amount of money that would be required in buildings and improvements, they might perhaps take her advice. But no, Bennie was eager to begin at once, and he was seconded by Dick and Donald. When Mary suggested they use the money that had come in from Goluckie, that was now in the bank, Dick said emphatically:

"No. We are going to come to you for counsel, and we know you will give it to us freely; but we will raise the funds ourselves. We are not going to trouble Charles, as we know he has his hands full with his political affairs. But we shall claim the advice and co-operation of the general and Mr. Austin."

So, it was settled. And in the afternoon they all went up to the city to remain a day before returning to Willow Springs.

The next morning Mary called at one of the hospitals to see a woman who was a sister of one of the young men that were staying at the cottages. As she sat talking to her she heard some one say:

"You want to give her special attention. Braintree, the young millionaire, sent her here, and bespoke our best efforts for herself and child. She is very weak. It seems she was an opera singer."

For a minute Mary turned sick. She was fond of Dick; but these *words, woman, child, opera singer.* She felt she could guess the rest. She had looked around and saw it was one of the ward physicians speaking to the nurse. When he left, she went to the nurse and said:

"I am a friend of Mr. Braintree. Will you take me to the woman he sent here?"

Without a word the nurse led her to a curtained recess

at the end of the ward, and there on a bed lay a pale, wan woman about forty years of age. Mary felt there must be some mistake. But a few questions soon put her into possession of all the facts of the case. She had sought this woman, thinking she was some poor, deceived, unfortunate, whom she might befriend; and with a pang at her heart as she thought of Dick.

When she learned all, and remembered that Dick had not even mentioned the circumstance of his visiting his tenements, her heart told her, then, that under his apathetic manner there was more than was apparent on the surface. She was quite overcome by the knowledge and the tears streamed from her eyes.

"Dear, dear old Dick," thought Mary. "I will never doubt you again."

After doing what she could to insure further comfort for the sick woman, Mary hastened to Edith to tell her of her discovery and to laud Dick.

CHAPTER XXXI.

ON BOARD THE "WHITE PIGEON."

Dick had declared he would give money and let some one else do the managing; but he seemed to forget all about it, and went to work in earnest with Bennie and Donald. Donald had had some practical experience; but Dick and Bennie were absolutely like children. No doubt thousands of dollars would have been squandered in acquiring the knowledge necessary for such a stupendous undertaking, had it not been for General Starkweather and Mr. Austin. Their advice was invaluable. They had studied ways and means of getting the best results from money expended, and knew just where to secure competent and conscientious help.

Bennie and Donald spent the summer at Newport with Dick on his steam yacht *White Pigeon.* Frequently, after some brilliant dinner, ball, or other entertainment, where they had been the gayest of the gay, in the still hours of the morning, when they were asleep on board, like a carrier dove, the *White Pigeon* could be seen speeding to New York City at the rate of twenty knots an hour.

There they spent hours with the general and their contractors over their plans and in devising the best system

for the work they had in hand. They seemed very much in earnest, and the general watched them with some curiosity.

It must be confessed they were the last men one would pick out as philanthropists. To see Bennie with his dainty, dapper figure and smiling face, as he went singing and whistling, with his hat set jauntily on his head, swinging his little rattan cane; or to see Dick or Donald rise, shake down their perfectly creased trousers, pull down their waistcoats, set their hats carefully on their heads and saunter carelessly toward the Casino, the observed of all observers, was a sight that was totally foreign to all preconceived ideas of philanthropy; and caused one to doubt the result. But in spite of the fact that they made a joke of it, Dick declaring that they were tottering on in the blindness of their own destiny, they demonstrated that their enthusiasm was not ephemeral; for, as day succeeded day, and flew into weeks and months, they amply proved their staying power. They did not seem to understand the word, *surrender*. They became more and more absorbed, and before the summer was over, they each had a fund of practical knowledge of which they had never before dreamed. It was fast making solid men of all three.

It is really wonderful what determination, backed by plenty of money, can accomplish. As soon as the ground was properly laid out at the new Shamrock Community they commenced to build; and before the first snow fall the most of the grading was done, water and gas pipes laid; and the place had assumed quite the appearance of a well-regulated village.

The hope and the intention were to get as many of the people as possible into their homes by mid-winter, so that they would be ready for the spring work.

The contractors were pledged to secrecy, and, as yet no one knew who the promoters were. They rather thought it would be a great joke to spring it suddenly on their friends, after it had become a well-defined fact.

While Dick was absorbed in this project, he did not neglect his resolve to have his own tenement houses put in good condition. They were simply turned inside out, cleaned, plastered, painted, and varnished. Air-shafts were widened and whitened. Taking his cue from the tragedy that occurred in regard to the fire-escape, he had tall iron posts put, at intervals, round the roofs of his houses, and a stout wire netting stretched securely on them; and above all this an adjustable awning. The place was furnished with plenty of comfortable seats and strong hammocks, thus affording a breathing place for his tenants and making a safe and desirable play-ground for the children. Then remembering what he had seen and heard at Goluckie, in regard to cleanliness, he engaged an inspector to see that the homes were kept clean. He took special pains to select proper janitors, a part of whose imperative duties, were to see that the fire-escapes were kept unemcumbered and ready to be used at all times.

He took care that his tenants did not suffer during this process of renovation. He determined upon one thing: to rent only to those that would permit an inspection of their private apartments at least once a week. He was determined to abolish filth and uncleanliness in his own houses.

In addition to improving his houses in the tenement district, he had given a contract for two or three blocks of tenement houses to be built on Fordham Heights, where he happened to have quite a number of acres of land. These were to be on a new and improved plan. The houses were not to exceed three stories in height. They

were to be built around a large square with a garden in the center. There were to be local reading-rooms and other comforts for the tenants. The street cars were accessible, and already he had begun to make an effort to procure reduced rates on them. In fact, so far, Dick was really making an honest effort and showing that he was not quite soulless.

The *White Pigeon* was an up-to-date steel steam yacht, a veritable floating palace with every luxury that could be conceived. There were suites of rooms elaborately furnished, the whole magnificently appointed and illuminated with electricity.

Little by little, events occurred, during the summer, that served to stimulate and awaken and were to effectually change the whole course of the lives of these three men.

During the early part of the season, Dick had invited Mr. Willette, one of the greatest actors of the day, to spend a week on the *White Pigeon.*

Mr. Willette, besides being a finished artist, was a brilliant thinker and writer.

After dinner, on the first day of his arrival on board, they were lounging on deck, smoking. At first, the conversation was fragmentary and jocose, Mr. Willette having in store some capital new jokes, which he told in his own inimitable manner. One of them referred to the atheism of Voltaire and Tom Paine, and was rather of a take-off on them. After a hearty laugh, Mr. Willette said:

"After all, we owe much to these doughty foes of fanaticism who have brought about this rational state of enlightened Christianity. Many of these shackle-breakers sowed in tears, and we are now reaping in joy, with gratitude and thanksgiving.

"Just see what our modern Goliath, Colonel Eversoll,

has done. He is a man of great merit and rare ability. He is fearless. He has riddled superstitions and shams that lurk in the churches and hide behind what is known as Christianity."

"Ah! So you are one of his admirers?" asked Dick.

"Yes, indeed. He loves the stage and the stage loves him. He is a friend of the actor. I think it would be safe to say that without an exception, the actors almost adore him. It is one of his pet sayings that the stage makes man immortal; that through the medium of the actor, the dead are brought to life, and again are made to play their part in life's drama. But, by the way, do you know where Colonel Eversoll is? I have neither seen him nor heard of him for some time."

Then Donald related to him all about the colonel's illness and cure. Instead of laughing at it, as they had expected, Mr. Willette seemed intensely interested and began to ask many questions.

"Then you don't think it charlatanism?" asked Dick.

"Most certainly not. I think it a God's fact. It is truly wonderful! Yet no one can fail to note the rapidly growing tolerance toward this new philosophy. Healing without drugs is becoming very common."

"Then *you* do not believe in doctors of medicine?" asked Bennie.

"Yes, I do if they are rational. There is, no doubt, truth in both systems of healing. It is the cranks in either system to whom I object. We have divine authority for curing without drugs. Religion has been healed of such festering sores as Dante's 'Inferno' and Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' by the laying on of the hands of rationalism and plain, practical sense, which has materialized a healthier state of both body and mind. Nearly all physical conditions are due to the state of mind. Ask

any physician and he will tell you he cannot cure 'a mind diseased.' "

"Do you believe in Christianity?" asked Dick.

"Since the sulphurous hells have gone up in smoke, I certainly do. All that is most refined in our art and eloquence; all that is most cheering and elevating in our literature; all that is most lasting, practical and comforting in our philosophy; and all that is most praiseworthy in society, we owe to Christianity. Then why should I not believe in it?"

"You think, then, there has been a radical change religiously?" asked Dick.

"There has been a marvelous change. There used to be two extremes—either the religious fanatic or the person who jested and turned everything sacred into a witty *bon mot*. Now, we have a religion based on common sense and scientific facts. And in this light the people that once joked have become serious thinkers and students. There has been a long and bitter warfare between extremists."

"But don't you think they have rather overdone it?" asked Bennie.

"By no means. It has resulted in an intellectual equilibrium and in a toleration never known before since the world began. The gems have been separated from the dross. People that once would not listen to religion, believing it to be fanaticism, have now learned to recognize in it a new and great value through the light of rationalism."

Dick mentally recalled the afternoon at Willowby Rest and the discussion there.

"Well, we must all admit," said he thoughtfully, as he knocked the ashes from his cigar, "that this century transcends all others for scientific discoveries; and it may be

that its closing will usher in a great change religiously. In fact, even those that have given but little thought to the subject, must know from history alone, the great difference between this and the past century in both religion and science."

"My dear boy, we have still greater discoveries than science had heretofore given us, or the evolution of religion from darkness to light, to close this century with. Science gave us steam, electricity, the X-ray, and all the wonderful astronomical and microscopical discoveries. And it would seem in the light of the past, that nothing could transcend these. And yet they, one and all, pale into insignificance when we compare them with the true science of all sciences, the power and science of the mind of man with its psychological influences, that **until** recently have been but vaguely known or understood.

"I admit there is still much crudeness and misconception; but notwithstanding the absurdity of many of the principles advanced, the great fundamental truths have been discovered and are gradually forcing their way to the surface, and will eventually dominate us and our surroundings. The old Puritanic cry of 'Children of the devil,' 'Witchcraft!' and later, the cry of 'Charlatanism!' by the churches and the doctors went far toward retarding the advancement of the mind. It almost obscured reason; but with modern science and enlightenment, emancipation has come, and man now heeds not the old cry."

"There is a lot of the old thought yet in the world," said Donald with much spirit. "I know of a few places where I would like to see rationalism dominant. I know ministers who still keep the throttle-valve of hell and perdition wide open and yawning; and I have seen people with susceptible minds, live in tortures on the sulphurous

confines of hell. How many people have died seeing the blue smoke curling up from the hell to which they expected to go! I can well remember when a boy, and living in Texas, how I hated the Church and the Bible after hearing one of those sin-nailing sermons by Sam Jones or by Dixon Williams. These men were regular old Bible-thumpers, and used to tell us we must forgive *our* enemies, and in the same breath tell how God damned *His* enemies. After hearing them, we boys used to go out together and try to see who could say the worst things. As I look back to it, now, it would have disheartened the Christ, Himself, as to the result of His teachings on earth."

"I would like to hear one of those sermons," said Dick.

"If you don't want to be disgusted with religion, don't, by the bones of Cæsar or Brutus, go to hear one of those sermons," vehemently exclaimed Donald. The very recollection of them seemed to fill him with resentment.

"Those pessimistic leaders thought they were, and that they are now, the living oracles of God," said Mr. Willette, thoughtfully blowing the cigar-smoke from his lips in fantastic rings. "But, those bugbears of heredity, Hell and Perdition, are fast passing away, and will soon be gone. The ideal brotherhood is coming. I hope to live to see the time when ignorance, vice and oppression shall be overcome, and when war shall cease. The great divine command is to love, and as men gradually find equipoise and rest, they will fulfill that command. I never sigh for the 'good old days,' but I pray I may live to see the good days that are coming."

"Are you not something of an idealist?" asked Dick quizzically, as he struck a match and lighted a fresh cigar.

"Possibly. But was not Christ an idealist? His ideals were for charity, health, happiness and brotherly love. These He demonstrated while here. Yet, His ideals are

only now, after two thousand years, beginning to be fulfilled. His ideals either slumbered or were distorted until the present time. They are now being properly interpreted and understood for the first time."

"Much that we see and hear, religiously or scientifically, nowadays, seems like a flight of fancy," said Bennie.

"But it is not," replied Mr. Willette; "as all must know who have kept abreast of the times. Once, the telegraph and the telephone transcended all other modes of communication, and when we chained our ears to them we felt we had annihilated time and space. Now, the man that understands mind force and vibration and its dynamic powers, whispers on a sunbeam, or on the passing breezes to his friend across the continent. No, it is not fancy nor speculation; but a well-defined, scientific fact."

"It is wonderful and almost incomprehensible," said Bennie.

"Well, it does not seem much more wonderful than that your anatomical eccentricities can be discovered by the X-ray," laughed Dick.

"No; nor that a photographic plate can be made so sensitive that it can be acted upon by the light of a star millions of miles away from the earth," said Donald.

"All these are wonderful," said Mr. Willette, "and yet, do you comprehend what it means to be able to weigh and measure an impression of the mind, and to so create your own atmosphere that you can dominate your surroundings in such a way that within them nothing perturbing can come? Yet, it is scientifically done, and in the light of these established facts, charlatanism and clouds vanish."

"I have seen so much of you, how does it happen I never have heard you mention these things before?" queried Dick.

"In the first place," replied Mr. Willette, "I never sup-

posed you were interested in anything of this sort; but before we had exchanged a dozen words, to-night, I felt the sympathetic vibration of your minds. And so, the conversation has drifted on in this channel; although I believe, as usual, I have done most of the talking. Strange, too," continued he thoughtfully, "that as much as we have been together I never felt this impression before. I usually do recognize this sympathy in others from the first."

There was a pause. The little waves could be heard lapping the sides of the vessel. In the dim light lent by the colored globes on the electric lights, one would have found it difficult to have read the expression on the faces of the three as they significantly glanced at one another. Presently Dick said:

"I have had a good many surprises, lately, and to-night has added another. I never should have thought of you being so absorbed and enthusiastic in this line."

"My dear sir, you must remember we are actors. We have learned to conceal our joys as well as our sorrows. We do not wear our beliefs on our sleeves."

"You say, *actors*. Are there others that believe as you do in your profession?"

"My dear boy, the woods are full of 'em," laughed Willette. "Hundreds of them! This power of mind is rapidly saturating not only our but other professions too. There was a time when my audiences dominated me, and I was a victim of their caprice. Now, I dominate my audience. Actors, artists, musicians, singers and public speakers are fast realizing this great truth and are studying it scientifically."

"Well," said Dick, "I confess we three chaps are a good deal interested in this direction. But none of us has given it much thought or study. The thing that has started us on this trail, has been the cure of Colonel Eversoll."

And then Dick related all that had occurred at Willow Springs, not neglecting a history of little Gertrude and her wonderful though childlike power, and wound up his narrative by saying:

"Mrs. Thornton claims her authority is wholly taken from the Bible. Do you agree with her?"

Mr. Willette had sat absorbing with great interest all Dick had said; and replied:

"Yes, certainly. I could not believe in Christianity and believe otherwise; and I admit that there is no book like the Bible in the whole world. It is a book that in this new light, is becoming more valued and revered daily."

Then he went on to explain to his three listeners many fine points in these unexplored paths, with enthusiasm and brilliancy. He spoke of the healing and referred them to the reports of the Society for Psychical Research where there were well attested facts demonstrated from a purely scientific standpoint. He explained how Mrs. Thornton, thoroughly understanding these great scientific facts, combined with spiritual truth, together with her own purity, mental force and dynamic power, had sent this force out to those afflicted and carried health and healing to them.

"And I can well understand how a little child conceived and born in this thought could also have great power and be a wonderful aid to her mother in healing."

"It is a great problem to tussle with," said Dick.

"I cannot comprehend it," said Bennie, "and yet I want to. It seems so vague; and the more I hear of it the more bewildered I become."

"Man should never receive his vision second-hand," replied Mr. Willette. "It is his unalienable, God-given right to think for himself. For this he is given intelligence. So, if you are interested in this line of thought, you must think and study it out for yourself. On no organization,

nor individual, is the power bestowed collectively, to receive and impart knowledge as in the old days. Our minds would starve as well as our bodies if we tried to nourish them by deputy. Intellectual slavery is a thing of the past. We now have intellectual freedom. Study it, my boy," said Mr. Willette, reaching out his hand and patting Bennie on the shoulder. "It will come to you. You will soon feel the uncaging of your soul and find it rising upon the wings of free and independent thought, where it will obtain that happiness and liberty that 'age cannot wither nor time decay.'"

There was silence for a moment, and again there came to them the subdued rhythm of the sea. Then Donald said:

"What a power there is in the human voice when understood as you understand it. I feel as if you had pronounced a benediction."

"If I have not I ought," said Mr. Willette with animation, starting up and stretching himself like a leopard. "This is the longest sermon I have preached in some time."

"Just as a matter of curiosity, I would like to look into this," said Dick. "I propose we adjourn to the cabin and liquidate and have some things; and while doing so, you can give us a list of books that will throw the best light on the subject."

They descended to the saloon where the sideboard glistened with gold and silver and glass. Liveried servants were in attendance; and, soon from the midst of these splendid surroundings sounds issued as of small boys practicing with pop-guns, accompanied by a peculiar, fizzing noise, and the refreshing and musical clinking of ice in delicate glasses. All this attested to the fact that there was something "extra dry" in the cabin besides the liquids.

Before twenty-four hours there was a goodly supply of

books on the new science in the cabin of the *White Pigeon,* and, as the minds of the three were in sympathy and were interested in common in the promotion of their new scheme, and thinking of it almost constantly, they began to notice that although no word would be spoken to indicate it, yet they would catch one another's thoughts. This struck them more forcibly, when, on meeting Edith, or Mary, or the general, or Charles, to have that person say:

"To-day, or this morning, or last night, I was thinking so and so." And nearly always they would find, on comparing notes, that it had all the appearance of direct communication. These were, of course, so far, mainly coincidences; and had not reached any scientific or even experimental stage. But Mr. Willette had made the remark, on hearing them dubbed the "Trinity," that there is a great dynamic force in the concentration of three persons; and he also said that the three of them on the vessel, which was in a great measure cut off from the usual inharmonious vibrations and surroundings, ought to be able to create an atmosphere that would be a great aid to them. Mr. Willette loved this science; and from his suggestions they obtained many valuable hints and much information. They took up the study because it was something new, and as a temporary pastime for the hot weather, but before the summer waned they were making an earnest, scientific research of psychic phenomena, and became so thoroughly interested in it and in the project they were carrying on, that they declared they did not know where the summer had flown. Heretofore, they always had been obliged to search for amusement and contrive how to keep cool. They never knew that it had been an unusually hot summer. In this they unconsciously and clearly demonstrated the *power* of the *mind.*

CHAPTER XXXII.

NEWPORT.

It was a gay, brilliant season at Newport. All the usual things were done, and some that were unusual. There were "vaudevilling," "automobilling," yachting, golfing, strange vagaries, realities and some silent tragedies. There was not a moment for *ennui*. The Brandts led as usual, in the best of taste, and entertained lavishly.

When the season was well advanced, the morning papers contained the following announcement:

"Among the late arrivals, are young Judge Thornton and his wife. They will spend the remainder of the season with Colonel and Mrs. Brandt at their villa, and on board the steam yacht, *White Pigeon,* as guests of Richard Braintree. Mrs. Thornton is the most beautiful and attractive of the younger matrons of the 'Four Hundred.'"

On arriving at Newport, Mary found that her three girl-friends had not been idle; and not only that, but they were using a great deal of tact in their proceedings. Very adroitly they had sounded many of the girls and younger matrons in their set, and had been able to interest a number in their philanthropic movement.

Among this set, the girls had been delighted to find

several who knew something of and were somewhat interested in the study of the new philosophy. Therefore, they determined to form themselves into a class for the study of this science for the coming winter, and to try to persuade Mrs. Thornton to become their teacher. They also formed a philanthropic club, which they also hoped to place under the direction of Mary.

When she arrived, she was besought to comply with these arrangements, to which she gladly acquiesced.

Every day, through the summer, Mary had taken Gertrude in her arms and had gone in to her "Holy of Holies," and there in the *silence,* held communion with the invisible forces. And concentrating all her dynamic power for courage and strength, had sent it forth to those co-workers at Newport; and she was overjoyed at these signs of activity for practical work, in a direction where it could result in so much far-reaching good.

The rectors of two of the fashionable New York churches, one of which the Brandts attended, were sojourning at Newport. Edith had had a long talk with both of them in regard to the Goluckie community. These good men were more than delighted, especially the clergyman to whose flock Edith belonged, to find this fair, beautiful girl, and her companions, so earnestly interested in this philanthropic work. And it was no difficult thing for Edith to persuade them to go with her to meet Mary and visit Goluckie. They had been favorably impressed, and the eventual outcome of this visit had been the determination of these two clergymen to make the effort to establish a community in connection with their churches. That great incentive to this resolve had been given each of them by a promise from Edith, will be seen hereafter.

Charles had suggested that a good way to start another community would be to organize a regular stock company

and issue the stock at so much a share. In this way, people who so desired to aid and who were not able to invest large sums of money, could buy what stock they could afford and thus feel interested and that they were helping along in the work. Besides, he argued, if many people were interested in these communities, and sending good thoughts to them for success, they would surely succeed. This plan had struck Dick so favorably that he offered to organize a company, get out a charter, and take the responsibility of selling the stock the coming winter.

The two clergymen, after looking carefully into this method and concluding it was a good one, decided to adopt it, and were now looking about for a suitable location for their community.

So, it can be seen how, though merry and gay, these young people were not wholly idle or unmindful of others. Their plans were well laid for the coming season, and it now remained to be seen whether they would be carried into execution.

Some one has said: "There is a tremendous power of attraction in aspiration." This was clearly demonstrated during Mary's and Charles's stay at Newport, by the friends that were interested in the new science and philanthropic movement. And many were the days and evenings that were spent on board the *White Pigeon,* as she rocked idly, or danced gaily over the waves. Sometimes the party of eight would remain for two or three days on board, excluded from the rush and crush of society. This was especially enjoyed by Charles, who had worked unusually hard all summer; and these were the only breathing spells he had allowed himself. Thus, he had slipped the leash of care and had abandoned himself to enjoyment.

Mary and Charles were so happy. Their honeymoon had glided into seemingly endless moons. Being so con-

genial to each other, and to these dear young souls that were with them, they passed many golden hours inhaling the restful, life-giving gifts of fragrance from the sea.

Since the day spent on Bennie's land, Donald, Dick and Bennie had been dubbed the "Trinity" among themselves, Annie declaring they were a "Job lot," and so long as they had to be taken, it would simplify matters if taken in a lump.

Charles had declared it was the first time he had been able to freely say that he indorsed and fully believed in the "Trinity."

A close observer could see that there was a gradual change coming over some of the members of this party, aside from any we have yet mentioned. Mary's quick eye and ear caught this and wondered where it would lead.

Annie and Pansy were not soft, purring, kittenish girls. On the contrary, they romped about on deck, playing the maddest pranks on the others and affording a perpetual fund of amusement.

Every day Pansy grew more beautiful and witching. Her large, child-eyes, her perfect face and pliant form, her pretty frocks so fluffy, her hair and ribbons so riotous, it was no wonder that poor Donald was becoming bewildered. He looked at her sometimes as if he thought she did not belong to the earth, and as if he feared she might vanish from his sight forever.

One night, Pansy had a headache and remained in her room. Donald had gone to his room to write letters. Mary and Charles were looking over the daily papers in the saloon. Dick was half reclining on a deck-divan, lazily smoking. Bennie and Edith and Annie were walking up and down the deck. Annie and Bennie were talking. Edith had noticed Dick's listless attitude, and she immediately became alarmed for fear he was slipping back

into his old self. Since Mary had spoken of Emerson's conception of man, Edith had been trying to analyze Dick. Mary had declared to her that after returning from the hospital, where she had talked with the sick woman, that she believed they would eventually find rich color where Dick's heart throbbed. And now, as he lay there, he was the picture of lassitude and inactivity.

"No," she thought, "I can't let him slip back. He is too useful. We need him too much." And disengaging her hand from Bennie's arm, she went over to Dick, and as she took a seat near him she said, with a touch of the old scorn in her voice:

"Back in the old slough?"

Dick lazily looked at her. "Why do you ask?"

"Because, at this moment, you look like an incurable victim of the giant, *Ennui.*"

"Is that the only way you arrived at the profound conclusion?"

"Yes, and by the smoke that so gracefully and lazily curled from your cigar."

Dick now sat up straight from his lounging position, where he had been gazing at the fantastic shapes of the smoke as it circled in the air, and said:

"I have been in a delicious languor. I have been reviewing the comedies and tragedies of my life. You wake me up to remember, as Carlyle says: 'This world is not a puppet-play, but a terrible God's fact.' The old fellow was right. It's true in more ways than one."

"It's your turn, now, to tell me how you arrived at this conclusion," said Edith, delighted at Dick's evident animation.

"By a very simple method I can assure you. Yesterday, Donald, little Bennie, and I——"

Bennie and Annie were passing at this moment and

heard what Dick was saying. A frown gathered on Bennie's face as they passed on, and as Edith has succeeded in rousing Dick from his lethargy, it may be interesting to the reader to follow Annie and Bennie as they walked aft and sat down on a divan, and listen to what Bennie is saying:

"How I hate that expression—'little Bennie Gordon.'"

"That's funny. Why, I've heard you call yourself 'little Bennie Gordon' a dozen times, and besides, you must remember you're not a giant," said Annie, jokingly.

"That's the worst of it, the terrible truth of it," replied Bennie, disconsolately.

"Well, what does it matter? It isn't the biggest people that are the best or bravest," said Annie.

"It matters a good deal. What woman would want to marry a man to whom everybody tacked on the word, *little,* as a title of distinction?"

Annie almost gasped at the sudden question; but thinking that Bennie spoke in general, and of no one in particular, she laughed softly and asked:

"Oh, it's that, is it? Poor little Bennie, I am so sorry!" said she soothingly. "Who is the fair creature?"

"Oh, I don't wonder that you are inclined to joke about it," said Bennie, desperately; "but I assure you it began to be a serious thing to me since I have learned to care for a woman I feel sure could never love me, on account of my size if for no other reason. It's no laughing matter, believe me."

Had it been light, he would have seen how the drooping lids quivered upon the now red, now pallid, cheeks of Annie. To her, while he was speaking, those moments seemed protracted to an age. She knew this was a morbid fancy of Bennie's and that he was considered a most eligible young man and much sought after. She won-

dered who could be trifling with Bennie. She felt for a moment as if she would suffocate; then she gained control of her voice and asked:

"How do you know she objects to your size? Have you asked her?"

"No, I have not. And I feel it would be of no use. I could not bear a refusal."

"It seems to me that is cowardly. And that is the last thing I would ever accuse you of," said Annie, rising and feeling as if she would die if she prolonged the interview. She was as pale as a ghost. "Take my advice and ask her."

Bennie seemed stung at the word *cowardly;* and started up as she rose and said excitedly:

"I will take your advice, Annie, I will. Take it to yourself. If you knew that I loved *you*—loved you to adoration—would you—do you—that is, could *you* ever learn to love *me?*"

Annie dropped into the seat from which she had risen. She paused before replying. The hot blood had rushed to her face.

"No. I could never *learn* to love you, Bennie."

"There! I knew it," cried Bennie in a choking voice. "I don't blame you; but it's cruelly hard to bear. I would lay down my life for you, Annie."

Annie had recovered herself completely. She looked up at Bennie, who was standing before her.

"Shall I tell you why I could not learn to love you?"

"No, Annie, you need not tell me nor make any excuses. I know it is because you couldn't learn to love a dwarf like me. You want a great big fellow that looks like somebody. And I don't blame you because you cannot learn to love me."

"But you must hear my reason for not being able to

do so," insisted Annie. "It is because, when I found out the kind of man you were, I found it out suddenly. It was a revelation. I found you were so good, so true, so noble, so strong—so everything that a grand man should be, that you seemed a very tower of strength to me. And before I could learn to love you, I was engulfed in love, overwhelmed by it, and my only fear has been that you never could learn to love *me.*"

"Annie! Annie!" gasped Bennie; "is it true?"

"It is true, Bennie, I love you dearly, devotedly."

"And Donald and your mother, what will they——"

"There is no man on earth they will so gladly give me to as you."

Instead of catching Annie in his arms and going mad with joy as the conventional lovers do, Bennie tottered forward like a drunken man, and dropped at her feet, burying his head in her lap, and sobbed like a child. Annie only loved him the more for this exhibition of the depth of his feeling; and her warm, white womanly hands with their dainty fingers, caressed his soft golden hair, and pressed themselves tenderly against his burning cheeks, and waited for him to master his feelings. She knew there was nothing groveling or cowardly about Bennie, that he had the soul of a giant, and that only joy could make him shed tears. She realized her love had come so suddenly upon him.

Bennie caught her hands in his and showered them with both kisses and tears. He staggered to his feet, and just as he caught her in his arms and kissed her, Pansy's voice came floating to them in the stillness, as she called:

"Annie, Annie, come here quick!"

Annie, quickly disengaging herself, fled in the direction of the voice.

Bennie at once sought Donald and startled him with

the sight of his agitation and tear-stained face, as he tumbled into a chair, gasping incoherently Annie's name. Donald sprang to his feet and started to the door, thinking Annie must be overboard. Bennie caught hold of him to stop him.

"Let me go, man, let me go!" exclaimed Donald. "What is the matter with you?" pushing Bennie off.

"Don't, for heaven's sake, Donald, don't go," incoherently exclaimed Bennie. "That is—you see—Annie loves me."

Donald looked at him for an instant; then, as the truth dawned upon him he collapsed into a chair and positively *roared.* No other word can express it. It was not a genteel *ha, ha, ha!* but a regular *haw, haw, haw! he, he he! hi, hi, hi! haw, haw, haw!*—Just such a laugh as used to break forth from his lips when he was racing over the broad Texas prairies with the wind tossing his tawny hair.

Bennie always declared, afterward, that Donald laughed in eleven different keys in a minute.

Dick heard the commotion, and rushing down, put his head inside the door and found Donald with his arms around Bennie, waltzing him ecstatically about the room.

Among the many incidents of importance that occurred at Newport, in connection with these young people, there was one that as it seemed to make an indelible impression on Dick and Bennie, and caused them to become more resolute than ever, in pursuit of the work they had undertaken, and to make them more thoughtful of all the blessings that daily surrounded them, our readers may be interested in it.

As Carl still remained at Bethesda, Mary had brought him to Newport with her. One evening, during the progress of a dinner-dance at the Brandt villa, Dick and Bennie

had wandered into the conservatory. Dick sat down near the fountain under a great, spreading palm.

Carl and Gertrude were standing near a large, rustic table, on which were piled shells and various curios, in the center of which was a large vase filled with grasses, wheat-heads and flowers.

Gertrude's chatter was always interesting, and, at this moment she was holding a beautiful orchid in her hand and admiring it, as she said to Carl:

"How the Maker of flowers must have loved beautiful things. See the dress of this beautiful orchid. See the ruffles and scallops and fringes."

Carl had just cracked an English walnut, and he gave her half of the kernel. Part of the hull was sticking to it, and as she separated it she said:

"See that kernel. Isn't it a pretty shape, and the hull —how beautifully it is carved on the outside."

Carl examined it, then tossed it away. He took up a shell and commenced dipping it in the water. Gertrude pulled a stalk of wheat and began tickling him with it. He caught it and broke off the head.

"There!" she exclaimed; "you have destroyed a whole village."

"How?" asked Carl.

"Why, don't you see? Each grain has a little home by itself, and they all grow together in a little community, like Goluckie; and these long beards are soldiers that stand at the door and guard the little wheat-grain people," laughed Gertrude, as she mischievously flung the head of wheat in Carl's face, and turning to run away, she flew straight into the arms of Dick.

"Oh, Mr. Braintree!" laughed Gertrude, clinging to him. "Don't let him throw the water on me;" for Carl had

filled a shell with water, and started in pursuit of his assailant. He now stood, holding the shell, irresolute.

"I won't do it again, I won't do it again!" protested Gertrude, laughing and trying to shelter herself in Dick's arms.

"Cross your heart?" said Carl.

"Yes, I cross my heart," said Gertrude, trying to look serious as she made a cross on her tiny breast.

She was all in white chiffon, like a bit of sea-foam; her snowy neck and arms were bare, and on her left shoulder was a knot of ribbon in which was tied a great cluster of forget-me-nots. Half reluctantly, Carl returned the water to the fountain, and then Gertrude called to him, saying:

"Oh, Carl, bring that shell here and show it to Mr. Braintree."

It was an unusually brilliantly colored shell.

"There!" said Gertrude, holding it up to the light, "isn't it lovely? I think it must have been a little Prince Abalone that lived in that shell. Don't you think so, Mr. Braintree?"

Dick took the shell and after admiring it and declaring it beautiful, he said as he toyed with her golden hair:

"I heard you telling pretty little stories about the flowers. Can't you tell me a story?"

Gertrude at once became very thoughtful and serious, as she said:

"Mamma told me some little stories about the flowers. I think she said she read them in a book. She said they were not *sure enough for true* stories; but she said they were comfortable to think about."

"What were they? Can you tell us?" said Dick.

"Oh! Of course I can; but you must remember they're *not for true,*" said Gertrude, impressively.

"I'll remember," said Dick.

"Do you know why the roses are scarlet, and why the lily is the dearest of all the flowers, and—and not always, but nearly always, has a drop of dew on her heart, and—and has the sweetest perfume?"

"No. Can you tell me?"

"Of course I can, if you're very good," laughed Gertrude, drawing an imaginary line down Dick's nose with her dainty forefinger. "Now, at first, the lily was not so white as it is now; but once the dear Christ, who was without sin, was talking with the people. There were tears in His eyes, because He loved His people so; and wanted them to be very good. He stooped and plucked a lily; and first He pressed it against His cheek, and one of His tears fell in its cup. And the perfume from His sinless fingers went into the lily. Then, the dear Lord held the lily against His breast, while He talked to His people. And the lily was so glad that she grew whiter and whiter, and trembled for joy; and she hugged the teardrop close to her heart. And Mamma said that it is a nice, little thing to think about. And perhaps that is why we think the lily the purest flower."

"But you didn't tell why the rose was red," said Carl.

"Oh! I most forgot that. Mamma says that when the dear Lord plucked the lily, there was a rose near it and it grew very pale, longing to be noticed by Him. And by and by the dear Lord looked down, and saw the rose and read her thoughts; and he stooped and plucked her, and she blushed a rosy red; and her perfume grew very sweet. Oh! I think it's a beautiful little story even if it isn't a real-for-true one," said Gertrude, as she nestled her golden head up against Dick's breast.

There was a moment's silence. Carl and Bennie seemed to be thinking. Dick was trying to swallow an awfully

troublesome lump that had risen in his throat. He had his arm around Gertrude, holding her close. As no one said anything, Gertrude turned her face upward, and looking at Dick with her beautiful blue eyes, as she put up her hand and stroked his cheek, asked:

"Don't you think it's a beautiful story, Mr. Braintree?"

"It's the most beautiful story I ever heard," said Dick. "I am always going to remember it." There was a decided huskiness in his voice.

"I'm so glad you like it," said Gertrude with a little satisfied sigh as she complacently cuddled her head once more on the ocean of shirt-front.

In all the long years afterward of Dick's life, he never forgot the silence which followed Gertrude's chatter about the flowers. It made an indelibale impression upon him. He remembered the tune the orchestra was playing, and the hum of the voices in the distance. He remembered the peculiar stillness in the conservatory and the odor of the plants and the musical plashing of the water in the fountain. And, above all, he remembered the soft, warm touch, the feeling of this beautiful, rosy, dimpled child that he held whose very body seemed to exhale a perfume sweeter than any flower that ever bloomed. She now lay in his arms motionless. Her eyes were half veiled by their long dark lashes, her cheeks were flushed, her lips slightly apart, disclosing the tips of her tiny teeth, like a half open rose-bud giving one a glimpse of its heart. It seemed to him she was hardly mortal, and he unconsciously felt his arms tightening about her as if in fear that she might dissolve from his view. His eyes wandered to Bennie, who seemed thoughtfully studying the mosaics in the marble floor under his feet. Carl was standing by the fountain dipping his fingers in the water.

Dick glanced down again at the child in his arms with

the bunch of for-get-me-nots tied on her shoulder, and said, as he touched them with his fingers:

"And these pretty little flowers, have you no story about them?"

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Gertrude, starting up, all alive in a minute. "But it's a funny story."

"All right," said Dick. "Tell us the funny story. I should like to hear it."

"Well, you must remember it isn't true; it's just a little comfortable story like the other one."

"All right. Go on. We will remember," laughed Dick.

"Well, when the dear Lord made all the flowers, he named them and told them they must remember their names and grow and be very beautiful and sweet and good. Well, they all did just as the dear Lord said, except one little blue flower, like these; and she was good and grew beautiful, but forgot her name. So, she came and said:

" 'Dear Lord, what did you say my name was?'

"And the dear Lord said, sweetly, 'For-get-me-not; for-get-me-not!' Wasn't she funny to forget her name?" said Gertrude slipping from Dick's lap to the floor.

He put out his hand to detain her, but, eluding his grasp and laughing, she flew down the long avenue of plants, looking back over her shoulder, and calling:

"For-get-me-not! For-get-me-not!"

They watched Gertrude for a moment. Then, Carl started in pursuit of her. Dick rose and putting forth his hand, took Bennie's hand in his, and said:

"Bennie, old boy, I feel like a man that had lived in Paradise all his life; but had been born blind, and suddenly received his sight."

"I'm sure I don't know what it is about that child, but I am never where she is ten minutes that I haven't something new to think about," said Bennie, "and I declare,

that little story quite upset me, don't you know? It's awfully soft and silly, I know, but I cawn't help it—by Jove!"

"You don't want to help it, Bennie. I felt just the same way myself. And I haven't any apology to make for it. I only want to apologize for my past miserable useless life; and if God spares me I shall try to be a different man in the future."

"By Jove! I'm with you," said Bennie joyfully, "and I'm deuced glad you don't think me a 'muff.' Of course, at first I thought it a great lark to help Miss Edith and Mrs. Thornton. But, by Jove! you know I don't mind telling *you* that I've become awfully interested, and feel now as if I couldn't give up our new pursuits on my own account."

"We will not give up the work, Bennie. We will consecrate ourselves anew to it from to-night," said Dick with much feeling and another reassuring pressure of the hand as they went forward to meet some acquaintances who were looking for them.

Afterward, when they were back in town, Bennie told Edith about the conversation with the children and about Gertrude's stories, and in a great burst of confidence, he exclaimed:

"And by Jove! Miss Edith, there is something funny about it. You know, those words, 'A little seed by the wayside,' 'Thoughts are things,' are continually coming to me. And like a refrain come those words, 'For-get-me-not, for-get-me-not.' It rings in my ears and I positively dream about roses, lilies and for-get-me-nots. And now, I want to tell you something else. You know, we all go to the art galleries. The pictures of the Saviour always had a disagreeable effect upon me, and I would hurry past them as quickly as possibly. I never gave them a second

thought; and now, I feel quite different. Yesterday, I stood for a full half hour looking at Tissot's picture of Christ, and by Jove! I thought it was beautiful; and I almost fancied I could see the stainless lily in His hand and hear those words, 'For-get-me-not, for-get-me-not.' Now, every time I see any for-get-me-nots in the florist's windows, I go and look at them as if I never saw any before. And by Jove! Dick is just as soft about it as I am. I was up in his room, the other day, and near his desk on a table were great heaps of red and pink roses. And on his desk in the most exquisite alabaster vase, that he bought on purpose to hold them, was a huge bunch of for-get-me-nots. He thinks them the prettiest flower; and he says that whenever he looks at them he sees the blue eyes and golden hair of Gertrude, and feels the soft touch of her fingers. He has painted and decorated a white enamelled panel, and inserted it in the top of his desk, and on it is a motto in German text, inwoven with for-get-me-nots. And now, see if you can guess what the motto is."

Edith, who had been deeply interested, now drew a long breath and said:

"Do you expect me to keep up with Dick's mental gymnastics? I haven't the slightest idea. I could never guess; but I'll confess to you, in confidence, I am curious to know his latest eccentricity."

"Well, it was this: 'A little child shall lead them.' Who would ever think that of Dick?"

"Who indeed!" echoed Edith with a note of surprise in her voice.

"When he saw that I noticed the flowers, he took me by the arm and led me up to them and said:

"'You see those flowers, Bennie? I have ordered this sort of flower to be placed here every day, and I have

painted this panel myself; and I am going to keep them here for the present. I find them comfortable things to think about,' said he, quoting Gertrude. 'When you fail to see them you will know I have been guilty of some act unworthy of a gentleman. They have been placed here with many mental resolutions. When they are removed, you will know those resolutions have been broken. Believe it or not; but these simple flowers,' said he, touching the for-get-me-nots with his fingers, 'have already been to me gentle monitors for good. If I spend a day here in my room, I become so attached to them that it almost gives me pain to feel that they must go and be replaced by fresh ones. Flowers, heretofore, have always been very beautiful to me, but a passing whim. I admired and thought I loved them. But through that child, they now live and breathe and speak to me, and it is with pain that I see them die.'

"So you see, Miss Edith, I'm not the only muff," laughed Bennie.

"You and Dick are growing sentimental," replied Edith. But if she had spoken all that was in her heart, she could have told quite as remarkable an experience. Ever since the day little Gertrude gave her explanation of people's thought and God's thought, Edith was mentally continually separating the two: "This is God's thought; this is people's thought," was constantly in her mind. She, and also Pansy, had heard many other wonderful things from Gertrude's lips, which had set them both thinking. And the two sisters had been drawn into closer communion through it; and she said to Pansy that night:

"There is a volume of meditation and instruction in the things that child drops. They seem to go further and make more impression than elaborate arguments."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THOUGHTLESS CHATTER OF SOCIETY WOMEN.

One afternoon, about ten or fifteen ladies were gathered in the library of the Brandt cottage, sipping tea and chatting. It was an informal, accidental gathering, and, as it was a rainy day they lingered and gossiped about the latest society happening, which chanced to be the recent elopement of a society woman with a man who was much beneath her socially. Society was shocked as much as Society was capable of being shocked. This lady had left her husband and two little daughters. It seemed that she had discovered, from a package of letters and a photograph, found among her husband's belongings, that he was untrue to her. And in order to spite him and to be revenged, she had made a bad matter worse by abandoning her home and children. So, the ladies babbled and gave free license to their speech and expressed all kind of opinions.

"Oh, well," said one, "marriage is a lottery—few prizes and many blanks. Men will have their fling, married or single."

"It's a woman's curiosity that breaks up many a happy home," said another. "The best way to get along with one's husband, is never to ask any questions. It's too risky."

"No; it's a bad plan to investigate," replied a little lady as she complacently sipped her tea.

"Of course it is," said another, with a toss of her head. "What did she want to go poking after his letters for? I wouldn't open a letter addressed to my husband for anything. I go on the principle that 'What the eye does not see the heart does not grieve for.'"

"Yes, indeed. I learned long ago never to ask my husband a question when he comes in late," said a young married woman. "I just shut my teeth and say to myself, 'He has been to his club.'"

"Well, perhaps he has," said Pansy.

This brought a shout of laughter at Pansy's simplicity.

"Well," continued another bright up-to-date sparkling young married woman, "I never go to my husband's office without 'phoning him that I am coming, so he can be prepared."

"Why do you do that?" asked Annie Barry in surprise.

This brought another laugh, as the lady replied, with a significant lifting of her eyebrows and a shrug of her aristocratic shoulders:

"He has a very handsome stenographer in his office, my dear."

"Well," said another little woman, with a sigh and in a tone as of one that had had experience, "matrimonial discord is worse than the fires of the infernal regions. The hymeneal altar is an altar of sacrifice. How many true, good, innocent hearts are being offered upon its strange fires, and they only know when it is too late."

"Most girls dream and think of marriage as a sort of blissful Nirvina," said a tall, stately blond with an hour-glass figure, as she languidly fanned herself with a long feather fan.

"And when they find it is not, they wonder what in

Devachan they were dreaming about," laughed a sprightly young matron as she jauntily adjusted her hat, before the mirror, preparatory to taking her departure.

"After all, marriage is a huge joke," said a lady old enough to express better sentiments. "It is sunshine and storm, gray peaks and winter snows. If you can live through the tumult of it all and get into that condition where you can look back and analyze it, perhaps you can make yourself believe it's better to have faced the storm than to have died an old maid. However, the old maid has the best of it, after all. She escapes the cares and worries of maternity."

"That's the worst of married life," said a pretty little woman who cuddled and petted a tiny dog in her arms. "Men have such world-before-the-flood ideas. My husband is a regular crank on the subject. He actually threatened to kill Tottie, he was so jealous of the dear little beast," said she, fondly stroking and caressing the dog. "My children are absolutely unmanageable. I can't do anything with them. I don't know how. He actually thinks I ought to look after them myself. He is so stupid, he goes up to the nursery, and sits there sometimes an hour at a time, and says it's interesting. I want something better to do than looking after a lot of unruly children," concluded she as she kissed and cuddled her dog.

"I, too," said another pretty little woman. "I have no children and hope I never may have. I would strangle them if I did," laughed she thoughtlessly.

"I am glad my girls are boys," said another sprightly lady. "Boys, you know, can bring up themselves. Girls are an awful care. You have to be so particular about them."

The sun now coming out, the ladies, one by one, began to take their leave until there were only a few girls, and

two or three married women, besides Mary, left in the room. Most of the time Mary had been conversing with a lady whom she had not seen for a long time; but she had her ears open, and had heard nearly all the conversation going on around her.

Mrs. Brandt had excused herself and had gone to attend some society meeting; so Edith, with the assistance of Annie Barry and Pansy, was hostess.

One of the girls, standing at the window watching the carriages as they rolled away, exclaimed sneeringly:

"Love, love! Give up all for love? Well, hardly. Love is all right in a play or a novel. Love, home-life, children; it's all sentiment. I wouldn't want it. I have too many married friends. Fetters, pale cheeks, sighs, excuse me. I'll none of it."

"After marriage whither flittest thou, O Love!" laughed another young lady.

"Do you really suppose all the things they said and insinuated are true?" asked Annie.

"They spoke as if they had personal knowledge," said Edith. "Mrs. Wharton, just now, as she was leaving, said something about us in good society. Good society! I never realized before what a misnomer the word was. Carlyle once said that England was composed of thirty million people—mostly fools. Now, I think the same might be said of society, with a slight change—mostly wicked."

"Mostly thoughtless," said Mary.

"Well," said Annie earnestly, as a warm flush came into her face, "such talk is a disgrace to civilization. It seems to me that if I did marry and found I'd made a mistake, I would have the good taste to keep it to myself; at least while I bore my husband's name. Those women all spoke as if from actual experience."

"Men seem to have no conscience," said Edith. "Married or single it doesn't seem to matter to them. They think it's all right, whatever they do."

"Girls should make up their minds not to marry such men," said Pansy. "I know all men are not alike. I know there are honest, true men. And that is the kind of a man I'm going to marry."

This brought a laugh from all, for Pansy spoke with much spirit.

To this, Edith replied, with an air of great experience and wisdom:

"You are a baby optimist. You don't know anything about it. Wait until you've had a little experience and have seen a little of the world. It's an old saw, but a true one, that all that glitters is not gold."

"Oh, listen to the oracle!" exclaimed Pansy. "I know this: that it is a beautiful old world with lots of good in it. When I got well and could go about, I just wanted to kiss everybody I was so happy. And I don't like people that are always going about, talking about sin and vice, and doing nothing to make sin and vice less. I positively felt ashamed of some of those women, myself. Their talk is even *bad*. Don't you think so, Mrs. Thornton?" said she, appealing to Mary.

"Yes, I do," said Mary, looking at Pansy with approval. "I think it rests largely with women to reform vice and folly in society."

"What can a woman, or rather a young girl do?" asked Edith.

"She can dare to be good," replied Mary; "dare to encourage only the good; dare not to let fashion sanctify vice; dare not to do things because they are customary or fashionable. There are fashionable accomplishments that

are innocent. There are fashionable requirements, customs and privileges that are pernicious."

"But how can a woman reach such vices?" asked Edith.

"By learning to discriminate, and by being wholesomely rational. If you would study yourself, you would be surprised to find out how much latent ability you have. You want to cultivate your intuitive faculties and make use of them and of all other attributes that you possess. You have all been given beauty, mental power, wealth and influence. You must make good use of them. Here or somewhere, somehow or some time, you will be called to account for them if wasted."

"I'm sure that is true. I feel it," said Annie Barry. "When we meet a man we usually take him for just what he appears to be on the surface; and if he appears well and has plenty of money we ask no more questions. We ought to be able to *feel* in our hearts whether he is all right."

"That's about it, Annie," said a little lady who had been married about three years. "Then we marry and do our thinking afterward. Then children come, bringing worries and cares. And we don't know what to do with them. Children make the most of the trouble."

"Can people plant their marriage on gold or position and expect lilies to bloom?" asked Mary. "I think, before a girl marries she ought to ask herself a few questions; and if she cannot answer those questions satisfactorily, she should not marry."

"What are the principal ones?" asked Edith.

"These are the ones I consider most important," replied Mary. "Am I willing to become a mother? If a new born babe were intrusted to me, how would I set about the task of caring for it? Would I love it, could I take charge of it, and become interested in it? You young ladies should remember you are to be the coming mothers, and

are to be the builders of the human temple. You should learn to lay a foundation now, whose rocks rest on eternity, and which should be for glory not for shame. Patience, thought and a loving spirit are what you need. That is all. And if you really desire them, you will not find them difficult graces to attain. But they are indispensable to wifehood and motherhood."

"But people never think of those serious things. All they think of seems to be dress, to run about, and to be gay," said another young lady. "They are seldom serious."

"My dear girls," warmly exclaimed Mary, "there is a difference between a gay, frivolous life, and a gay, thoughtful, useful life. It is right to wear beautiful things and enjoy them, because they are beautiful; and to live in beautiful homes. But we have no right to do it to the exclusion or expense or suffering of others. It is not the gayety, it is the thoughtlessless and indifference. Little matters are not always trifling. Chasing sunbeams might be thought trifling by some; but it is not, if it builds sunshine within your soul, or the souls intrusted to you."

"I don't quite understand," said Annie.

"The responsibility of the mother does not begin when the nurse lays the little one in her arms; but for months before," replied Mary.

The girls were all listening intently. Annie Barry with her pure, thoughtful face, leaned forward and asked anxiously:

"How? I do not understand this, Mrs. Thornton."

"Before the child has seen the light of day, when the little unborn soul is dwelling near her heart, like a young bird in its shell, even then it should awaken love. And the mother should begin to mould and develop it; and from

the time it is born, a tiny, helpless thing, it should be her constant care."

There was a pause. Mary glanced at the faces of those around her, smiled and said:

"You all look like a lot of interrogation points. Now come, let us be rational and sensible, without restraint. I am a wife and mother and I speak from experience when I say that nothing should be so beautiful to a woman as this study of maternity, and her resolve to be, when the time comes, a sensible, patient and intelligent mother. The development of the mind of a child is wonderful. Think of what it means to be an intelligent mother; to watch your child from birth to maturity. Every step is fraught with accession of knowledge of the wonders of the human mind and its capabilities."

"Yet with all that, I heard a woman say, the other day," said Pansy, "that she had spent lots of time reading and studying how to treat dogs and keep them healthy. She went on to tell exactly what kind of food each kind of dog should have, how warm they should be kept, and even the temperature of their bath; and what kind of perfume certain dogs liked. She must have thought the dog mind superior to the human mind."

"That is the kind of woman that Donald calls 'doggoned ladies,'" laughed Annie. "We see plenty of that kind of woman. But who is the particular woman to whom you refer?"

"It was a woman who was here this afternoon, who ridiculed her husband for taking an interest in his own children, and who said she wanted something better to do than caring for them," replied Pansy.

"Something better to do!" repeated Mary with an echo of sadness in her voice. "Ah, God! It is the noblest, grandest work, if rightly understood. No learned seers

have given to the world a grander employment. Think, just stop and think what the *mind* is. Just think of being able to form a *mind.* Did it ever occur to you? Study the mind, and apply this knowledge to the infant, as it begins its first efforts, and watch the unfolding, the expanding. See how it comprehends the ideas we attempt to communicate, and how our impressions give it a most decided bias. This study of the infant must come, not entirely, but chiefly from the mother. Her mother-instinct, her natural capacity, comes through her maternity. I think the time will come when mothers will so thoroughly understand the science of the mind and its power, that they will be enabled to make their children just what they wish them to be. Napoleon rightly said, 'It is the mother that makes the man.' "

"I don't believe I quite understand what you mean. How can a woman make her children what she wishes them?" asked Edith.

"Through the power of the mind," replied Mary.

"My dear Mrs. Thornton, do you believe that possible?" exclaimed Edith in astonishment.

"I know it to be an incontrovertible fact," replied Mary. "It is a perfectly natural philosophy reduced to an exact science, sustained by facts and observation. Let me prove it to you. The mother, through the power of her mind, builds instantly into the body of her unborn child the atoms of what is known as a *birth-mark,* that lasts through life. We all have a friend, a young man, right here in Newport who is the unfortunate victim of this affliction. He has a birth-mark on his face. Now, if this can be done through the mind, why can it not build enduring atoms of truth, love, justice, and mercy, and beauty and health? A mind that can be so intense as to bring into existence a child marked as this man is—what can't it

do? It requires no occult science to believe this. Any physician will verify the truth of this statement of the power of the mother's mind. This being so, how important, then, is the study of maternity to young girls that they may understand what a great responsibility rests upon them.

"This is one reason I have such pity for people in the slums. I feel sorry for the men, but more sorry for the women, who, in addition to their poverty, are compelled to give birth to children amid squalor and vice. The men are overburdened, it is true; but when a man is overburdened, his wife is also. A woman should have rest and strength in order to become a proper mother. A lack of this is fearful on the mother, but much worse on the unborn child.

"You remember the pretty house that you all spoke of, at Goluckie, that we did not visit? That is what we call 'The Mother's Retreat.' The grounds are pretty, the house bright and cheerful and filled with inexpensive but artistic and attractive things. Here, any coming mother can go and remain, if she so desires, the entire period previous to the birth of her child. We have simple rules and regulations governing this home. I cannot now go into the particulars of it, but already the demonstrated facts for good results have proved the wisdom of the experiment. The marvelous influence on the men and families from this one experiment, has been a revelation. It has made them think seriously on a subject to which they had never before given a thought. I am more proud of my efforts in this direction than anything I have ever done. You shall all go with me, some day, to visit this house. Then I can explain to you more minutely its great advantages.

"Ah," sighed Mary, "we hear people talk, and feel a con-

tempt for their weakness and folly, yet if we could go back to their conception and birth and their childhood environment, we could account for their idiosyncrasies and would not wonder that they are so bad; but we would wonder that they are as good as they are. Many men fly into an awful temper and the first impulse of his heart is to kill some one. Now, the probabilities are, if we could trace it back, that the mother wanted to kill her unborn babe, and so implanted murder in its heart and destined it, before birth, to capital punishment.

"I stood by the side of a casket where lay a little child three years old. The mother stood there with dry, tearless eyes. I placed my hand on her arm and attempted to say some word of consolation to her. She looked up into my face with a smile and said:

"'You don't understand. I am not grieving. I am rejoicing and thanking heaven for taking him away.'

"I said no more; but I felt that under it was some terrible grief. It was not heartlessness. Afterward, she told me that before the birth of the child she had been compelled to carry on a system of lying and deceit that was repugnant to her. And that with the child's first dawning intelligence, he would steal everything he could lay his hands on.

"One of the most plebeian families we have at Goluckie, had a boy who has developed marvelous artistic talent. His taste runs entirely to marine painting. It was an enigma to me. He was the eldest child. Neither the father nor the mother nor the two younger children have the slightest talent for anything artistic. I was about to give up the matter as an unsolved problem, when the mother, speaking one day of Italy, said:

"'When I first came to this country I near died of homesickness. I didn't like New York, and I would go

down to the wharf and look out across the water and long to go back to my Italy. I would watch every ship and wish I could steal on board and go back to my lovely Italy. The ships and the water looked far more beautiful to me than the land; for they led to Italy. That was before my little Clio was born. After he came, I forgot all about it and I'm happy here now.'

"The problem was solved in regard to this child. This plebeian mother, through her longing for her beloved Italy, had unconsciously planted within the body of her unborn child the seeds of a divine talent, which, through cultivation, was to grow and blossom and become instrumental in placing him in the front rank as gentleman and painter; where, with brush and canvas, he would become a messenger of joy to thousands. It is not an uncommon thing to see genius spring from the plebeian ranks, and we wonder at it; but I am convinced that could we trace those individuals from conception to birth, we would find that, at some moment, the plain common mother, for some reason, had been the recipient of a divine inspiration. The inspiration may have been totally foreign to the mother's normal condition, as we who have studied this subject know that at such times the mother is possessed of many strange vagaries. In the light of these facts you can readily see how important it is that mothers should be cared for. This world would become heaven indeed, if children were brought into it properly. I think it is the crying sin of our churches to-day that they do not give more attention to this subject. Clergymen that stand in the high places of the world seldom or never raise their voices against this awful crime. They often preach to parents about bringing *up* their children, but not *how* to bring them *into* the world, or how the mind of the mother leaves its indelible impression through life on her child. Most

mothers are ignorant and think there is no responsibility until the child is born. Bring children *into* the world right, and there will not be so much trouble about bringing them up. We study how to propagate all kinds of animals and plants, but children come or force themselves into the world haphazard, and are generally unwelcome. A child should be welcomed with joy as a gift from God, and its life should be full of love, free from endless chiding and eternal lecturing. The natural child is like a flower that requires light and warmth."

"Then you think it is only women that are responsible for the human race?" asked Edith.

"By no means. Men are almost, if not equally responsible. A man has a tremendous responsibility resting upon him. He should thoroughly understand this and know that he has no right to become a father unless he is mentally, morally, and physically fit. He should know also how to care for his wife, and know that during the period of maternity she should have the tenderest care. Anger, malice, jealousy, envy are all reflected at such times, and leave an indelible impression. I know a man who made a great study of propagating fine stock, reading books, and giving time and painstaking study to the subject, while at the same time his wife, throughout maternity, was crossed, irritated and neglected. And I have seen the result: fine beautiful stock and dwarfed human nature. Oh, it is pitiful!

"In regard to the theory advanced here, this afternoon, that boys can bring up themselves, I consider it one of the saddest and cruellest phases of our civilization of to-day, and a blight on Christendom. The accepted idea that a man's sins and infidelities do not count the same as a woman's is infamous. Man's soul, properly attuned to the Infinite, and placed on high and holy things, will find

that nature will take care of him. But this strength can only come to him through communion with the Infinite.

"Every home should have its Holy of Holies—a place of quiet set apart for meditation, where one can rest for a little time, shutting out all perturbing and unpleasant influences. Thus communing heart to heart with nature's God."

"Oh, Mrs. Thornton, I don't know what to say," said Pansy. "I never thought of these things before."

"Nor I," said Annie, "and it seems dreadful."

"I understand perfectly," said Mary, "that you have not; but I wish you would think about it. I wish I could feel that the thoughtless chatter of the women here this afternoon, had been for good, which it will be if it causes you to think, to look down deep into life, and to resolve that you will begin, *now,* to so form and mould your lives that these great sins may never be laid at your door. Your power is great, if you can only realize it. You can make yourselves just what you wish to be."

"Oh, if we only could," said Annie.

This wish was echoed by every one present.

"The only thing is it seems so complex," said one of the young ladies.

"If only we could have you with us always," said Pansy.

"Do your own thinking. When you make up your mind to this study, you will find nothing complex. Your vision will become clarified; you will always be weak if you lean upon others for support. You know you can come to me at any and all times for any advice that I am able to give you. But I would have you strong and rely on yourselves. When you come to study the mind, you will find it is not an idealized something of which we know nothing. It has real force—mind-force. It vibrates and influences other minds, or it is influenced by other minds, according

to its intensity. Keep yourselves as happy as possible. I do not believe in tears. I think we ought to try and live always on the Mount of Transfiguration."

"Oh, Mrs. Thornton," said Edith earnestly, "I am sure we all appreciate your frankness in talking to us as you have; and I believe I voice every one here when I say we will surely profit by all you have said. I feel, already, much wiser than I did an hour ago, and as if it had been the most profitable hour of my life. But we must still come to you as our director and leader for advice and counsel."

"I will be a student with you, and we will work together and hope for good results. Therefore, we must be constantly on our guard, and to be on our guard is to pray without ceasing; and to pray without ceasing is to have the mind and soul constantly filled with those heavenly attributes, Love, Truth, Charity and Justice. Then, and not until then, will you be guided and directed. You will then be able to steer your little bark safely through doubts, mists and uncertainties."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MIS-SPENT ENERGIES.

At the moment our last chapter closed, could the reader have looked in upon the group and have seen these fair, young girls around Mary, as she sat in their midst teaching them, I fancy it would have left on memory's wall an ineffaceable picture, one that would linger with him forever.

Mary was still so young, so wondrously fair, so beautiful, that, at this moment, she looked as if hardly of this earth.

To-day, as so frequently happened, she was gowned in her favorite material—soft, creamy, clinging *crêpe de chine,* richly embroidered. The gown was cut away at the neck, and the sleeves were opened to the shoulders, showing the perfect, snowy throat and arms without adornment. The only bit of color or ornament she wore, was a long, narrow brooch set with three rare, flaming, gleaming topazes. They were surrounded with brilliants set in silver. This brooch confined the folds of her gown at the waist, and glowed like triple suns.

Edith was attired in a magnificent, soft India silk of deepest orange, powdered with black bees; and around her bare thoat and arms, were coiled black serpents of glisten-

ing jet, with jeweled heads. Her jetty hair was artistically arranged and held in place by jeweled pins and combs.

Pansy was enveloped in a diaphanous mystery of pink chiffon and silk, while Annie was gowned in palest violet and rose. The remainder of the group were as richly attired. The appointments of the room, in which they were seated, were in excellent taste, and everything in it was of the richest, rarest, and most costly description.

It was the last place the teacher of science, the philantropist, or the teacher of Truth, would have looked for *practical* disciples. It was the kind of room, *dress,* and surroundings into which the missionary rarely enters, and from which he usually flies. The splendor of the inmates of these homes, their artistic love of the beautiful, their culture, their very refinement, seem to bar them out from the only thing that, if they possessed it, would make them, with their endowments and surroundings, as nearly perfect as it would be possible to become: charity—not of the purse, for that they already have, but charity of the soul. They need to be given the cud of plain, practical thought, to become, as it were ruminating animals.

They are too cultured, too sensible, to endure for a moment the whining, canting, hypocritical creature with a mission. But there are many true, noble Christians, grand good men and women, that have been brought up amidst refined surroundings, who know the value of a word in season, yet when they feel called to speak this word, seldom or never speak it among their own, but seem to feel they are called to go out and down among a totally different class of people from their intellectual equals. True missionary work should begin at home.

Can poor sewing and shop girls and clerks, who, from their cradle to manhood and womanhood, have fought a battle for bread and raiment, who have had to work or

starve, who have had little or no time for culture, can *they* be more receptive or more appreciative or need true missionary work more than this bevy of brilliant-gowned girls that surrounded Mary? And yet, women that feel called upon to do this kind of work, pass these girls by and hunt up the poor working-girl and lecture *her*. To compare the best stratum of the two classes, the refined rich and the refined poor, it is unquestionably the refined rich class that gives the least thought to dress in spite of assertions to the contrary. People of this class are usually born to the purple. Their desires as to dress and beautiful surroundings are so quickly materialized through the medium of gold, that, comparatively speaking, it is not a lingering thought to them, for a woman consciously well-gowned, forgets her dress and thinks of something else.

In point of fact, it is the poor working-girl that worries and frets and thinks about dress. Nor is she to be blamed nor lectured for it. It is part of woman's dower of womanliness to wish to look comely; and the rational desire for dress is perfectly justifiable in high or low.

The working-girl is usually an ambitious girl, who loves the good things in life. Therefore, in her hard life of straitened circumstances she endeavors to appear well. She spends hours over the problem of dress and personal adornment. After getting a new gown, the question comes of how is it possible to eke out a new hat and boots and gloves and all the dainty accessories to go with a properly appointed costume, and without which, even a plain and simple outfit would offend the taste of a natural and well-conditioned American working-girl.

But how many of them have even that much? Their wages are so cruelly small they cannot. Therefore, this thought of dress is in their minds all the time. Perhaps

such an one will crush her pride and go out in an incomplete toilet,—respectable dress, but with worn boots or gloves or a shabby hat. If she is as sensitive as most refined people are, she cannot forget the incongruity and enjoy herself; for she is conscious every hour of the deficiencies of her toilet. She feels that every one she meets, knows them just as she does.

How many affairs, lectures, Art-exhibitions, and things of that sort, are there, where young people can go to improve themselves and where the cost is nothing. And yet, how many stay away from the very places they would like to go, because they do not wish to be seen without being properly attired. No use to tell them not to mind it, and lecture them about the vanity of dress. To be decently and tastefully appareled is not vanity. It is part of the eternal fitness of things. The breath spent in lecturing them had better be spent lecturing their rich employer, who grinds them down to the barest necessities.

If the mind grows by what it feeds on, as has been scientifically demonstrated, then the working-girl should not be blamed for her desire for dress.

If women and girls in high places can be made to *think,* they are the ones that can do the missionary work. They have it in their power to help these girls and revolutionize their lives, and give them some sunshine. Giving their cold, hard, round dollars will not do it. They must give their thoughts, their co-operation, in order to better the situation. They have the time, the influence, and *can* work out the problem. No need to put on some kind of garb, or set oneself apart; no need to go to the working-girls in a well-appointed, though perhaps a plain gown and lecture them on the beauty of contentment and holiness; but instead, they should go to those who employ them, in their own set, and never rest until the ways of living are so

adjusted that the unfortunate women are enabled to enjoy not only an equivalent for their labor, but are protected from wanton temptation. If the laborers could only learn to labor among the sinners at their own doors, and not feel called upon to rush to people whose ways are so totally foreign to theirs!

Following, is a sketch of the characters of two good true men, both willing to consecrate their lives to the betterment of their fellow-men; but they are the antipodes of each other. They start out to put their desires in execution. They enter a palatial city home. They pass from room to room, all beautifully appointed, and enter one that is stored with the rarest treasures of Art, the quintessence of the brains of men that lived, labored, and died, building and crystallizing their thoughts and souls with brush and chisel, into marble and color, that have lasted from ancient Greece to modern Rome; and which will last for ages yet unborn. Many people are in the room, who move about in such a way that one knows they are among the things that they appreciate and understand. There is no surprise, no wonder in their faces, as they touch the exquisite articles, only love and appreciation and an air of companionship as they gaze on these rare and beautiful treasures.

Among them, is an exquisitively polished instrument. Above the keyboard is a white sheet of paper on which, to one of these men, are strange characters in black. It is the crystallized soul of Hayden.

One of the men of our sketch, seats himself at the instrument, and immediately the sounds of conversation die away, and keen interest is shown on every face.

His hands glide over the keys in a sweet prelude that quickens the long-slumbering soul, and Haydn, for the moment, lives again and speaks to the souls of men. The

music dies away. There are tears in the eyes of the listeners. Their souls have been touched by the hand of the Master. He rises and leaves the instrument. His companion has watched him, and is charmed. He feels he can do the same. Therefore, with great assurance, he takes the vacated seat. There are the keys before him; the perfect instrument, the harmony within. The rest remains with him. He places his hands upon the keys, and his fingers wander over them. But what is the result? Discord the most discordant. In vain he puts forth his best efforts. The harder he labors the worse the confusion. Not one harmonious sound can he produce. He can fret it, but he cannot play upon it. The very people he would charm, fly in frenzy from him, and he is looked upon as a transgressor. His energies have been wasted. With his companion, he passes into another room in which there is a safety-vault. There is the vault and there is the key. The treasure lies within. He feels called to unlock it. He has unlocked many doors, and he is sure he can unlock this one. This is simple and easy. He takes the key with confidence, but, try as he may, the vault remains locked with its treasures hugged close to its heart. He cannot understand. Why is this? Simply because he does not understand the combination. But lo! the master takes the key, the man who understands; and at his touch the doors fly back, and the glittering mass of wealth lies before him. It is with this vault as with the instrument that is the medium by which the master, with his magic, touches the dead and gone souls that resurrect themselves for him, but will not waken at the touch of alien hands.

The two companions go out and penetrate the wilderness. The harvest is ripe and should be garnered; but the laborers sleep, totally regardless of their duties and re-

sponsibilities. They must be aroused. But how? The man that awoke Haydn to life, sees a mammoth horn hanging on a tree. He feels called upon to blow it. He thinks it will be beautiful to rouse these sleeping men and see them set earnestly to work. He so desires to be instrumental in starting them from their oversleep into activity! He places the horn to his lips and puffs and blows. What is the result? A little discordant toot! He tries again and again. All in vain. There comes the unmusical note only, that jars upon his sensitive ear and makes no impression.

The sleepers still sleep on; or, if a faint echo reaches their ears, they laugh and sneer at his puny efforts. He has wasted his energies.

But his friend, who could not wake the soul of Haydn, takes the horn, inflates his lungs, and with the greatest ease blows from it a long, musical, soulful blast that wakens both field and forest, and echoes back from Nature's sounding-board of tree and shrub the musical sound as it travels through atmospheric ether, lingering and dying away in the sweetest music, until it is gathered on the bosom of silence and garnered away among the heavenly harmonies, there to become immortal, as an everlasting monument to noble effort.

This trumpet-blast rouses the sleeping laborers, and sends them into the field with such a stimulus from its thunder-blast, that the sluggishness falls away and they work with ardor; for their energies are fresh-born, or renewed, and their harvest becomes abundant.

Here the trumpet-blower is the master.

So it is in this life of mis-spent energies. People go from one extreme to another. Little by little, the horn-blower may learn to manipulate the keys of the musical instrument; and the master of the musical instrument

may have strength enough, and learn how to sufficiently inflate his lungs, to blow his soul *into* the horn, in order to blow it out and into the souls of the sleepers he would rouse. But the knowledge comes to each gradually.

When the rich step from their lofty pedestals to try to pull, from what they consider sin and sloth, the people immured there, it is frequently with a patronizing air, a *holier than thou* atmosphere, and an air of, "See how good I am to come to you."

Why should not the intelligent poor resent this just as much as the intelligent, refined rich resent the canting, whining, psalm-singing missionary-crank that startles him, as he is about to step into his carriage, or is endeavoring to catch a train, with the query:

"Are you prepared to meet your Gawd?" and thrust an italicized tract into his hand, written by another crank, equally as idiotic as himself, the English of which would set a well-conditioned man's teeth on edge, and paralyze his reasoning faculties, even if the morals attached were incrusted with the diamonds and gold of Truth.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LAST SPEECH OF THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN.

CHARLES had devoted himself to his political work all summer, and election-time was drawing nigh. He had no selfish interests. He put himself out of the question, for he was working for his country and the people.

Many politicians were pessimistic and declared that the political status was dark, corrupt, and in a totally demoralized condition, from which it never could emerge save by blood.

These political opinions served to stimulate Charles. He became a staunch leader. He was ever hopeful of his country, and for political adjustment; in brief, he was a *gilt-edged* politician. But while he was no fanatic, he could see the discontent of the people, and that it was growing; that they were becoming tired of inactivity and weary of waiting for better times and advanced wages. He saw the oppression of those in power and felt it was not just. He felt the great end and object in life was happiness, and that happiness could best be secured by being rational; and he knew it was difficult to be rational if one were suffering, or if loved ones were suffering, for the necessities of life. He visited the poor in the tenement district, and

felt that their environment was so bad that they were not fit to do intelligent work. He did not wonder at the unhappiness and discontent, and felt that it was the firebrand that was causing the trouble; and while he was capable of seeing both sides of the question, and knowing that those in power were not always cold and uncharitable any more than the poor were always grateful, still he took into consideration their suffering, and felt that a step must be taken in the right direction.

He made up his mind as to the right course to pursue in their behalf, and would not swerve from his principles.

He had his political enemies. Some were ignorant, some were idle, and others malicious; but in spite of their efforts, his election was unmistakably indicated. A plan, however, was quietly hatched to defeat him. A fearful lie had been concocted. The intention was not to "spring it" until the day of election, when it would be too late for him to refute it; and had their schemes not miscarried, without doubt they would have been successful in turning the election in favor of his opponent.

The night before the election, there was to be a grand rally, and Charles was to make his last speech. On the night in question, just before entering the hall where he was to speak, the whole nefarious plot was laid before him.

Charles was angry, but it was not the delirious impetuosity that imperils sound judgment. He made a ringing speech that so roused his audience that they cheered wildly. Near the close of his address he referred to the plot, and disclosed to his audience all the methods his enemies had taken to defy detection and defeat him.

When he had fully exposed the malice and injustice, and the motive for it all, he said:

"This underhand work comes upon me without the effect of making me weaker, but stronger for the struggle

that is before me. My reliance is in my constituency and in their sense of justice for fair dealing.

"I will say no more. I do not even stoop to refute these infamous accusations. I feel I can let the matter rest wholly and entirely with you, being sure that you will be instrumental in deciding for yourselves which is the right course for you to pursue."

Charles sat down amidst a perfect whirlwind of applause. Instead of weakening his cause, his enemies had strengthened it. That speech elected him. And again, Sidney Banks had squandered to no purpose the money he adored.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE OPENING OF THE SOCIAL SEASON.

So many places and things sleep through the winter; but the homes of the rich sleep through the long summer, and it takes a frost, a killing frost, to wake them to life.

The frost came early, this eventful autumn, and a premature and plentiful snowstorm caused the social world to flock back to the city, and the gay winter season came in with a rush. Balls, parties, receptions, teas and dinners followed, one after another, in rapid succession; among the very first of which, was a grand ball given by the Brandts for the purpose of having Pansy formally presented.

There had been a sudden and unexpected onslaught of titled foreigners from abroad, that had set society in a flutter.

Edith had a girl-friend who had gone abroad and purchased with hard, yellow, American dollars a title, and as an accessory or adjunct to the title, a nondescript, senile fraction of a man.

Many American women have married foreigners, some happily and some otherwise, the latter being by far the

most common; and they usually have found a master, and a hard one. Many of these foreigners make admirable lovers; but the love-making almost always ends at the altar, and unlike history, it never repeats itself. The wife becomes a sort of convenience, a sort of necessary evil, to her lord and master. He has all the liberties: she none.

What disillusions for the silly American girl, who has based her ideals, in this respect, on American ideas, where the wife is the companion and equal of the husband in everything, and in the matter of love and tenderness and attention is his superior; and it is he that serves.

Occasionally one of these title-buyers has the courage to take the whip-hand and maintain it, in spite of her would-be master.

It was so with this friend of Edith. She had bought and had paid for her title, which she was enjoying to the utmost, and she cared little for the male adjunct. She had now returned to America on a visit, and in her wake were a flood of admiring Anglomanics and eligible titles, who were ready to be cried off to the highest bidder. And, as king of these fortune-hunters, came the duke to whom Edith had been engaged. He had determined to renew his suit. Edith's friend was most anxious that the duke's efforts should not be in vain, and bent her energies to bringing about a reconciliation between them.

Edith had met, while abroad, almost all this freshly imported party, and had the honor (?) of turning a deaf ear to more than one of them.

The duke was a magnificent specimen of manhood. He was six feet tall, broad-shouldered, with a fine, military bearing. He was rather fair, having chestnut-brown hair and blue eyes. He was really striking, both in face and figure; and to look at him was to cease to wonder that he should have made a conquest of Edith's heart. The

puzzling question to most people, was how she had had the courage to break the engagement. For it was an open secret that she, not he, had dissolved the compact.

Shortly after arriving, the duke had sought an interview with Colonel Brandt, declaring his unaltered regard for his daughter, that he had put aside the cause of the rupture, his morganatic wife and family; that it was merely a matter of form, or of convenience, in England. There was nothing in it. He requested the privilege of renewing his addresses to Edith.

Colonel Brandt gave his consent, but at the same time, he assured the duke that his suit would be useless. But his grace felt sanguine. He had come determined not to take *no* for an answer.

All the titled nobility were present at the Brandt ball, and, conspicuous among them, was his grace. Mrs. Brandt felt pleased and flattered at the renewal of the duke's suit.

When Edith knew that she must meet him, she nerved herself for the ordeal. She had not recovered from the impression he had made upon her, and, although she would not marry him, and although she despised herself for it, she felt she loved him still, and that though this love was barred out of her life, no other would ever take the place of it.

On the night of the ball, she wore a rose-violet velvet dress, embroidered in gold. Her arms and neck were adorned with bracelets and necklace of amethysts and diamonds set in gold. With her purple-tinted black hair and her voilet eyes, with their long lashes and their black brows, she made a picture that was truly regal. She was perfectly self-contained. Never had she borne herself with more dignity and grace.

In great contrast to Edith, was Pansy, all in foamy

white, looking very much like a good, healthy sunbeam, rosy, dimpled, clinging, with the color coming and going in her face; and her eyes like stars. She was radiantly happy, and created a great sensation among the sterner sex, especially in the hearts of the fortune-hunters from across the sea.

These two girls were queens of fortune as well as of beauty, and the duke found himself wondering if his suit failed with Edith, what would be his chances with this little novice; and he bent all his energies toward making himself agreeable. He preferred Edith. Her stately, regal beauty and manner would accord with his title and position. He felt he would be proud of her, that she would hold her own with any woman in the world. In fact, he loved her quite as much as it was possible for him to love any woman. But he loved her money more.

Edith felt her heart thump at the sight of him, and at the sound of his voice; but, summoning all her strength and pride, she met him without a tremor. Dick watched her with curiosity, when she met the duke, and afterward, through the entire evening. Of late he began to realize she had a heart, a warm, true woman's heart that beat with noble emotions, and he also wondered if it were susceptible to the finer feelings of love. Dick was not in love with Edith. Yet, at one time, he had been very near it, nearer than with any other woman. And, someway, as he watched her this evening, and saw how beautiful she was, and how royally she bore herself, and as the realization had come to him of the depth of her nature, he felt a queer sensation come over him, and something seemed to grip his heart when he thought of the possibility of her caring for this handsome duke. In the last few months they had been thrown together almost daily; and each had become a surprise to the other, in the persistence with

which they still clung to their new pursuits. Edith had feared, each day, that she might see signs of the old apathy stealing over Dick, and was surprised that she did not. And he had supposed that when the social season arrived, her interest would lag. But, as yet, there was no sign of it. He had become much attached to her, as a friend, and he felt it would be hard to give her up, more especially to one of these titled foreigners that now swarmed around her and poured their flattery into her ears.

And Pansy—he had watched her also; saw what a belle she bid fair to become, and wondered what the end for both would be. Edith, Pansy and Annie Barry had all grown bold in their philanthropic work; and while they took Mary's advice, and did not talk much about it, it was seldom out of their minds, and they were ever ready to discuss it wherever it would do any good. They had begun to see with Mary's eyes, to comprehend the eternal fitness of things, to realize there was a time and place for everything.

They were now all engaged in the study of the power of Mind, and daily, almost hourly, they were having demonstrations to prove the theory correct.

Dick, Bennie and Donald having also become deeply immersed in the same study, it can easily be seen how they, under the strong leadership of such a woman as Mary, must have been drawn together in an unusual way. Annie and Pansy, both so young and so confiding, to whom as yet, nothing had occurred to ruffle the gently-flowing surface of their lives, had seemed to come at once into the peaceful harbor of this comforting thought, without much difficulty. But it had been harder for Edith. Metaphorically speaking, she had been compelled to fight every inch of the way over the ground; but at last, the great truths were becoming clearer to her, and it was beginning to tell

on her life. She had, little by little, dropped her cold, cynical speech and manner, and, at times, when the violet eyes would grow soft and tender, her face would become so womanly, so inexpressibly beautiful, that to other eyes than Dick's she became a marvel; and it is not a matter of surprise that she became a wonder to him nor that he became absorbed in studying her and in watching the transformation.

Edith was to the young lady members of the smart set what Dick was to the young men. She was a power. And the class in mind-culture and its deeper metaphysical meaning, comprised the best and most thoughtful of her acquaintances and, little by little, the influence of these girls was manifesting itself in the circle in which they moved.

The new stock company had been formed, according to the suggestion and under the direction of Charles and the general; and through the influence of Dick, Bennie and Donald and the co-operation of the young ladies, the greater part of the stock had been sold, and they were all in high spirits over the result.

The church project was also making rapid strides.

Colonel Brandt, when he found that Pansy was entirely well, was more than rejoiced, and, one morning, at Newport, he had said at the breakfast-table:

"What can we do about this? I presume I will not be allowed to present Mrs. Thornton with a check, will I?"

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Edith, "you cannot do that."

"Well, I feel I ought to do something. Can't you suggest some way out of the difficulty?" asked her father.

"Mrs. Thornton is interested in some extensive philanthropic movements. We might make a handsome contribution to some charitable project," replied Edith. "I, like you, feel we ought to do something in recognition

of the great blessing we have received in the restoration of health to Pansy."

She spoke so seriously, so earnestly, that, for a moment, her father glanced at her in surprise, and then at his wife who was quietly sipping her chocolate. She glanced up and met his eye. She had told him nothing of the scene with Edith, and it instantly occurred to her that with a munificent gift to some charitable institution or movement, all this fuss about charity work might stop, and Edith become satisfied to let the matter rest. So, she said:

"I think Edith is right. We should do something, and, as we cannot give money to Mrs. Thornton, the next best thing is to give it to charity." And, with a view to conciliating Edith and relieving herself from any thought or responsibility in the matter, she continued: "And I think we might leave the matter entirely in the hands of Edith as to what the charity shall be."

This surprised and pleased Edith very much, and her eyes expressed her delight. Her father said:

"Very well. We'll leave it entirely in your hands, Edith. I give you *carte blanche* to my check-book."

"What is the limit?" laughed Edith, quizzically.

"Oh, so you don't bankrupt me, I'll not grumble," replied her father good-naturedly. "Give what you like."

So, when Edith had succeeded in interesting the rectors we have heretofore mentioned, she had hinted that she would make a generous subscription to their community-fund. But they were more than surprised to have her head the two lists of stockholders with the sum of two hundred thousand dollars each. It had been a wonderful stimulus, and the balance of the stock went rapidly; so that these churches could feel that they would now have an entire community of their own.

The rectors had moved cautiously and quietly, and the

project had only now really taken perfect shape, and was beginning to be noised about. These good men were more than delighted, especially at the interest manifested by the young members of their congregations.

In the meantime, the Thorntons opened their Fifth Avenue mansion with a grand ball. The house was one of the handsomest and most extensive on the avenue, and it was luxuriously furnished.

On account of the stand Mary had taken there was much controversy as to the outcome. And it really was not entirely a tempest in a teapot. There were other influential women in the smart set besides Mary and the Brandts, and there was, undoubtedly, a very ugly undercurrent of talk setting in, by some of these, against Mary, as it was known that it was she alone who was leading not only Edith, but the three gentlemen, who had been society favorites, into running after these strange idols. And it must be confessed that the ball was looked forward to with considerable curiosity. The forces were ranging themselves on both sides, and this ball would decide Mary's social standing. And many, who did not care, one way or the other, buckled on their armor and went, as they fully expected to be present at a social squall. Some intended to remain only a short time and then go to some other function, for they felt this ball would be largely a refrigerated affair, and there would be no enjoyment of the usual kind. One lady, speaking to a friend about Mary, said:

"She has a lot of quixotic notions about society and religion. So, I warn you, before you go, I think it will be a sort of cross between a prayer-meeting and a Salvation Army jubilee."

"I presume she will take up a collection for the poor," said my lady of the victoria, on the night of the ball, as she entered her carriage and took her seat by Horace Burt.

"There is no telling what she will tackle us for," replied he.

The home of the Thorntons presented a brilliant scene, as the guests entered it, the effect of which lingered with them long afterward. The walls were covered with gorgeous tapestry, and with paintings and mirrors in richly gilded frames. There were rare art treasures that represented the best from the Orient and the Occident. Everywhere rich exotics were blooming. Mantels, windows, every available spot, were banked with them. Ensconced beneath a mass of feathery palms, a stringed orchestra was playing soft but inspiring music.

Mary, who was famed for her beauty, was never more surpassingly lovely than on this night, as she stood there, receiving her guests, an heirloom of the Starkweathers, the priceless pearl necklace, clasping her throat. Her dress was soft gray, embroidered in silver, and it set off her warm, rosy beauty to perfection. Many beautiful women were present; but the hostess, so young and fair, so gifted, outshone them all.

Mary and Charles moved about among their guests, bestowing a look here, a handclasp there. This queenly woman, this kingly man, had a magnetism all their own that few could resist.

One society man, after talking to Mary, said to a friend, as she turned away:

"Mrs. Thornton is a quietist.' She will never grow old. Wrinkles and gray hairs will know her not. I had feared she was changed from what I had heard. I am glad to know she is really so well balanced."

"Oh, she is not so overstrained in her ideas of duty and self-sacrifice that she forgets to be sensible and charming," was the reply.

At sight of Colonel Eversoll coming toward her, leaning

on her father's arm, Mary went forward and gave him both her hands; and to his remark about being an old fogy, she said, with her winsome smile:

"In spite of the gray hairs and bald heads, there is not an old person here to-night. They don't grow in this atmosphere."

Several came forward to greet the colonel, who, as usual, was brimming over with jollity and good-humor. And, as the two veterans moved down the room, of course there were remarks made about the colonel's agnosticism. One gentleman said:

"How many clergymen are looking forward to that man's death-bed as a test of what he has lived by. They think it will be his day of repentance when he comes to a bed of disease and ill-health."

Mary had stood watching the colonel and her father with a look of affection in her eyes, and as she turned her glance away, some one asked:

"You know him so well, Mrs. Thornton. What do *you* think about it?"

"In my opinion, he will die a natural death. The mind builds the body. He has been so humane. He has so loved Nature and lived so near to Nature's heart. He could die no other way. Lingering disease will never consume him. When his time comes, he will draw the drapery of his couch about him, and depart without pain or suffering, like stepping from this room into the next."

"Have no fear," said Charles; "he will meet death as he has met every obstacle in life, like a man."

All the conventional things were done. No one left as had been anticipated. Every one was gay, and seemed to be at their very best.

Mary had selected the music. It was clear cut and inspiring, not the languorous, sensuous kind.

The lights were subdued, but brilliant. There were no dark corners and nooks. There seemed to be no desire to "swoon" and "moon."

At the end of the winter, it was voted the most delightful ball of the season.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE MEETING OF PHILANTHROPISTS.

In order to expedite matters and to come in touch with the people they wished to assist, the "Trinity" had established a reading-room down in the tenement district, and Mary was quite a frequent visitor there, and lately it had become a habit to take one or more of the young girls with her that they might, little by little, see and learn something of the people they were working so earnestly to relieve. She also began taking them round to the various settlements and charitable institutions, thus gradually familiarizing them with the stupendous work that was being done by loving hearts and willing hands, and of the thousands and thousands of dollars contributed by the more fortunate class for the aid and comfort of the less fortunate.

They were frequently accompanied by one or more of the "Trinity," as they all three were much interested in studying the "settlement question," and the manner in which these settlements were being conducted in some parts of the city. They had made the acquaintance of many of the workers, and through them had made selections of several families for the new community.

The time had now come to begin placing the people in their new homes at Shamrock.

They had the land for another community and nearly all the stock had been sold. And Dick thought it would encourage the stockholders if they could meet the ladies and come in actual touch with the work.

Dick was full of the idea, and with this end in view, he had consulted with Mary and Edith. And an afternoon had been selected, invitations sent out, and there was a full attendance.

Among those that Dick had invited, were Horace Burt and another man who wrote and reported for the various newspapers; and at their jesting remarks about writing up the affair, Dick had replied:

"Oh, there is no secret any longer about what we are doing. So I give you *carte blanche* to write whatever you like. And if you have any friends you would like to bring, you can do so."

The time appointed for the meeting, was two o'clock in the afternoon, and it was held at the Thorntons.

As Mary met those that came, she noticed that there were but few with whom she was not quite familiar. One of these was a Mrs. Winston, a woman about forty years old, whom Mary particularly fancied. There was an indescribable charm and grace about her. Her gentle breeding, her refinement, were apparent in her tasteful attire and in her address. Her eyes were fine, frank and blue. She was a writer and was much interested in all philanthropic work.

Horace Burt presented one of his friends, a Miss Patton, a woman perhaps thirty-five years old. On seeing her head and shoulders one would have thought her a man. Her hair was cropped close and she wore a man's soft felt hat, collar, and cravat, and coat; a rather short dress-

skirt, heavy, large shoes and stout gloves. Her attire simply showed comfort without the slightest regard to taste or style. She was angular, had high cheek-bones, sharp nose, high forehead, and an oval face. She looked savagely plain and stiff. She wrote poetry. She had an incredulous, supercilious look on her face as if she had a supreme contempt for every one present. She had, so she said, dedicated her life to the upliftment of the poor. She would never marry, as that would interfere with her work. She was president and secretary of several societies, and occasionally reported for the papers.

Edith had invited Mrs. Dolores, the woman who had advised her to go down into the slums. She was rather elderly. Her mouth had an expression of stern, rigid piety; it would have been beautiful had it been allowed to laugh, or if it ever had been warmly kissed or had ever given kisses. Her eyes, that were naturally fine, had a trick of filling with tears on the slightest provocation, or with no provocation at all. She was bewilderingly dressed. Her clothing was of excellent material, but it was a conglomeration of odd colors. She was very wealthy and had devoted herself to charitable and church work for years. No one doubted her sincerity.

Dick had arranged the maps and charts on easels so that it would be easy for all to see them. Mary looked very *chic* in a perfectly plain tailor-made gown of soft gray. She opened the meeting by making a few remarks of welcome and very briefly outlining the work in which they were interested. Then turning to Dick, she said:

"You are all acquainted with Mr. Braintree, I believe, and so, no introduction is needed. He has become a practical worker in the lines of which I have just been speaking. I am sure he will be delighted to show his plans and answer all questions."

Dick came forward, bowing, smiling and self-possessed, and declared this was his maiden speech. He made some bright and complimentary remarks, spoke of the beautiful day and the good attendance, and declared he took it as a good omen for the success of the undertaking. Then, he went on talking like an old philanthropist, forgetting in his zeal that he might be causing surprise. He said, in part:

"I feel confident that if our designs for the relief of these unfortunate people, can be carried into effect, a new era will be commenced in New York. I don't think I am too sanguine."

He then gave a very clear, concise and lucid explanation of the charts on the easels. When he had explained them fully, and answered the many questions of the interested listeners, he said:

"You will see it is perfectly feasible and practical. And the superior advantages and opportunities we will be giving these people to help themselves, will be, I feel positive, a great inducement to others to assist in extending these settlements."

Then he spoke of the stock that remained unsold, and said:

"We wish it fully understood that neither aid nor gifts are solicited. It is a perfectly independent movement. Co-operation is gladly, thankfully accepted, but not solicited. You don't have to go before a justice of peace and swear your life is irreproachable, nor wear any kind of a badge to advertise yourself."

Dick sat down amidst a pretty little flutter and clapping of hands. It was a new sensation. His life began to become a wonder to him.

While the guests were arriving, and before there were more than a half a dozen present, Edith accidentally

dropped a small silver bracelet. One of the gentlemen sprang forward and picked it up, and, as he restored it to her, said banteringly:

"I will give you a hundred dollars for it if I may keep it as a souvenir."

The young ladies were raising a fund for the relief of some destitute families.

"Oh, what a splendid idea!" said Pansy clapping her hands. "Let's give a souvenir bazar and bring all the treasures we can spare from our personal belongings and sell them, and so raise the fund we desire."

This met the approval of those present, especially the gentlemen, who warmly applauded the idea and promised co-operation. And Edith was delegated to propose it when the guests had all assembled. This she now did, explaining what the fund was for.

The suggestion was met with great approbation, and the whole matter was settled, as to time and place, in a very short time.

Then, a dainty and charming old lady, with snowy hair, arose and said:

"Mrs. Thornton, I have heard a great deal about your metaphysical studies. I don't know anything about metaphysics, but I am told you found your theories on the Bible; and as I believe in the Bible, I am interested in knowing something about this new study. Won't you tell us about it?"

This was received with a fierce clapping of hands.

Mary felt that this was not just the place for the expounding of metaphysical truths, and she wished to hear from the visitors from other societies who were present; but she also wanted to be courteous to this dear, little white-haired lady. So she said:

"I fear we have not time to more than touch on the sur-

face of metaphysics, this afternoon." And she went on to give a few generalities, and talked not over ten minutes on the subject. Then, smiling very sweetly, she, in her most winsome manner, spoke to Mrs. Dolores, and asked her if she would not tell them something of her work.

Mrs. Dolores rose and came forward. For a brief instant a smile flitted across her face; but she banished it immediately as if ashamed of it.

She had a peculiar voice with a decided quaver and whimper in it. She prefaced her remarks by saying that she had once been a member and votary of this same society as themselves; but the Lord had mercifully opened her eyes to the vain and frivolous life she was leading, and had shown her the way to a happier and more useful existence.

When she said this, she was quite overcome and pressed her handkerchief to her eyes. The seats of some of the male portion of the little audience, seemed to become uncomfortable; for they began to move restlessly and to nervously stroke their moustaches or adjust their collars more comfortably. It seemed to affect Norwood Brinsley particularly, and he glanced vacantly from the window near him.

Mrs. Dolores then spoke of the society of which she was president, and of the enormous work they were doing. She said they were a busy people with no time to give to social frivolities, that they worked more than they discussed. She told of the number of families they had relieved, how much coal and wood they had distributed, how many aprons, flannel petticoats, and dresses they had made and given out—all of which was true, no doubt, and represented an immense amount of work.

She told how she had dismissed several of her servants and had done much of her own work and sewing, thereby

saving a good deal by this sacrifice of her personal comfort to give to the poor. She sighed and said that sighs counted for more than smiles; that Jesus wept; that tears and suffering purified the soul. She said she sometimes sewed far into the night, her tears flowing and blinding her eyes as she thought of the poor and their sufferings. She said she went down, *personally* into the slums, living as Jesus lived, and teaching as He taught; weeping as He wept; walking in His steps, with His dust-stained feet. She told how she had washed the children and had even got down on her knees and scrubbed a floor for a sick woman while the neighbors stood around and looked on in wonder to see a lady humble herself.

"Did you ever scrub a floor, Mrs. Thornton?" she asked, turning to Mary.

"No, I never did," replied Mary, simply and seriously.

"I thought not. Well, I have done it, with my tears flowing freely, happy that my tears could flow and glad that I could feel sorrow in my heart. What is needed are those that are in *earnest*—those that will go right down in the slums and show the people that they can become one of them; that they will take them by the hand and call them, *brother*. We should let them see our tears and feel for them and reach out our arms to support them, to show we love them, and so turn their hearts from their wickedness to God. When you do this, and not until then, can you hope for that reward that always comes to those that are willing to sacrifice themselves. But it takes Christian fortitude and self-denial to accomplish this—a true, sincere turning to God, and a desire to do His works, His bidding; this is necessary; and in no other way can it be done."

Mrs. Dolores sat down amidst an almost profound silence, a few trying to show some recognition by faint applause.

Mary arose, and, as brightly and as courteously as if she had been showered with compliments, turned to Miss Patton, and said:

"Shall we not have the pleasure of hearing your opinion and about your work?"

Miss Patton came forward and stood for several seconds surveying those present in the loftiest and most supercilious manner.

"I do not think I have anything special to add to what Mrs. Dolores has already said. I am the president of our society, and we are *workers*. Metaphorically speaking, we roll up our sleeves and go at it and work. We don't shirk."

She told of entertainments given, of turkeys distributed, of dinners packed in baskets and given out, of clothing, books, and toys collected and distributed. It seemed fabulous. It is doubtful if she stated anything but the truth about what they gave and the work they did. But her voice sounded like the ice-man's pick on a block of ice, and, as Donald declared, she looked like a cross-cut saw as she told of it. Then, she also declared that what was needed, were people that could go down into the slums and Christianize the heathen down there, and turn their souls to God. She also talked about Jesus weeping, and His dust-stained feet. But *her* eyes were hard and dry and looked as if she had never wept. Then she turned to Mary and said:

"But what is needed, is to be reinforced by a true Christian spirit and the love of God in your heart. Metaphysics won't do it. Nothing but true religion, as proclaimed by Jesus Christ, will do it. And true religion, my friend, is never a dance-loving, glass-clinking, joking, rollicking spirit. It condones no vanities nor petty pomps. With the follies of the hour, it has no sympathy. I feel

that I am speaking very plainly, but I feel I would not be doing my duty, nor His work, if, when I have the opportunity of reaching those that need a word in season, I refuse to utter it. Let none think that He," she exclaimed, pointing tragically toward the chandelier, "will tolerate pride, love of dress, avarice, and desire, such as are found in the drawing-rooms of our millionaires. Nor can any one hope to deceive by a few casual remarks on religion. How can any one pray among such scenes? They cannot. I trust the words I have spoken may reach some hearts and cause them to realize there is *practical* work to be done."

Miss Patton sat down with a supreme air of satisfaction and a look of one who had relieved her mind, and had done her duty in spite of consequences. Neither she nor Mrs. Dolores had referred to the object of the meeting, or had shown the slightest interest in the community movement.

It seemed for a very short time, as if a bucket of cold water had been thrown upon the little gathering. But Mary was equal to the occasion. She arose and made a few bright remarks, and several of the gentlemen made suggestions, and some inquired into the workings of the communities, and very soon the little ripple had passed away and the business was concluded.

Miss Patton, Mrs. Dolores, Mrs. Winston and Horace Burt, with several others, hurried away, and those remaining, broke up into little groups, discussing various features of the affair.

Mary had been called from the room to reply to a telegram.

In some of the groups, such exclamations might be heard as:

"Well! if those are sample philanthropists, I throw up

the whole thing," said one young fellow who had bought a good-sized block of stock in the new community.

"One would have thought we were a lot of hardened sinners and heathens. Their talk lets *me* out. If I met those women again, I would have lockjaw," said another investor.

"How absurd, how narrow, how full of prejudice their remarks were. No recognition of Mrs. Thorton's honest efforts," said Norwood Brinsley. "Their very virtues are tiresome. The idea of asking Mrs. Thornton if she ever scrubbed a floor!"

"No," said Bennie; "and Mrs. Thornton has too much conscience to practice on other people's floors. It wouldn't be fair. She would have given a dollar to some of those poor women, who were looking on, who understood the business and needed the money, and let them do it."

"Well, according to Mrs. Doleres's confession, her pleasure is nothing else but highly agreeable pain," said Dick. "If I were a pauper, I think I would find more hope in Mrs. Thornton's smiles than in Mrs. Dolores's tears."

"She is evidently happiest when she sighs," said another gentleman, referring to Mrs. Dolores.

"Her bonnet was on crooked," said Bennie.

"So was her nose," said Donald.

Mrs. Barry was watching Donald, and much to her regret, had seen the old antipathy to things orthodox sweeping over his face, and she was not surprised to hear him grind out, between his teeth, as he turned to Brinsley and Dick:

"Their remarks are what I call a part of the infernal unfitness of things."

"In plain Saxon, it is what I call damned injustice," said Norwood Brinsley, *sotto voce,* to Dick.

"Well, whatever you do, don't get cussy," said Dick in a voice that sounded as if there were many adjectives back of what he was saying, that if turned loose, would have made the atmosphere beautifully, brilliantly blue.

At this moment, Mary re-entered the room.

"My dear Mrs. Thornton, how much you have done!" exclaimed one of the ladies.

"Yes, and how much you deny yourself!" came in a chorus of voices from Mary's enthusiastic girl-friends and admirers; "and how you——"

They got no further in their expressions of esteem, for Mary, raising her hands in protestation, exclaimed, with a little more than her usual vehemence:

"Stop, stop! don't speak another word like that. Don't talk of my denying myself. I am not. I am doing what gives me *genuine pleasure*. Let us understand one another, once and for all."

In a moment, she had riveted the attention of every one.

"I am fond of society; but to make it a pursuit and live in it, in a whirl of gayety, would kill me. I like it as a recreation only. Why should I not? There, I meet those I love and have always known. But they are not everything to me. The happiest moments of my life are not while in society; but when I can look into the eyes of some man or woman or child and feel that I have been instrumental, at least, in making the burden of life easier to them.

"You all seem to have taken exception to the remarks made here, this afternoon. I do not mind them in the least, although I differ greatly from those ladies in my opinions. We will not discuss them nor their methods. It is simply a difference of opinion. But for the sake of those that have met with us, for the first time, we will

define our own position and ideas on these subjects. And in speaking of anything that has been said here, I merely wish to make clear my own views in regard to them, and I am not speaking in a spirit of criticism.

"First, as to dress and society, I think it only right, if possible, to be properly groomed. Let us take Nature, not man, for our guide. The flowers and plants are given times to grow and perfect themselves. We should not waste our time, but we should take time to perfect ourselves. God so designed it that the more culture the flower gets, the more it is improved. The lily-stalk and rose-tree are beautiful, but not so much so as when adorned by the blossoms. The naked tree is beautiful with its artistic branches and massive trunk. But they are not content, but hide their nakedness with beautiful green leaves, each a marvel in perfection of pattern and design. But still they are not content with this beautiful dress, and take on little green pods and balls for adornment; thus, little by little adding to their beauty. *This* is their time of gladness. Even on what we call the cold, barren rock, you will find, if you examine it, that Nature, with rain and wind, has covered it with exquisite tracings, thus adorning them.

"So, I think, by simply taking Nature as a guide, we are justified in looking after our persons and in dressing tastefully.

"Now, as to the work I am trying to do. I am aware not every woman can do what I am doing. A few years ago, no matter how much I might have wished it, I could not have done it. I did not have the means to do as extensive work as I am able to do now. Some ladies have not so many servants as I have, therefore, they have not so much time. With others, their husbands do not wish them to enter this kind of work. And then, an ever-

increasing family prevents others. And I believe one's first duty is to one's own family. I do not think it charity to neglect one's own family to attend to the family of some one else. Now, with me, it is different; and I would be a selfish ingrate if under the circumstances in which I am placed I did not do all I possibly could for others; and I do not deserve any credit for simply doing my duty. First, and above all else, I have the approval, consent and co-operation of both my father and husband. We are not Rothschilds; yet we have something to spare if we manage judiciously. And last, but not least, I have the time to devote to it. Now think of it! See this immense house and the size and extent of Mabelthorp and Bethesda for just a family of four. Instead of dismissing servants, I employ just as many as I possibly can that they may make an honest living and enjoy these beautiful homes with us.

"I believe in the power of the mind as Jesus taught it. It doesn't matter whether Christ was divine in the sense that the orthodox church teaches, or whether He was a man just as we are. I believe He, in some way, discovered the true way to life and health and happiness, and that He left it to us, and we have only to study it truly and sincerely, in order to profit by it. To what extent this science will reach, I am unable to say. It would be impossible to set a limit; but I believe as large a percentage can now be healed by this method as by drugs. And, believing this, I personally purchased Bethesda that I might have the great pleasure and happiness of having some place of my own, where I could send afflicted persons to be healed. I shall keep it open the year round. I keep there, in co-operation with me, a corps of persons, skilled in this science, to look after and teach all that are sent there. And right here I want to say that during the

summer, several thousand dollars were sent to me from unknown sources, for the use of the cottagers."

As Mary said this she looked straight at Norwood Brinsley and he blushed like a guilty school-boy.

"It was unsolicited, and came very unexpectedly; but it was acceptable and has blessed and made happy a number of young, refined lives, and has insured not temporary, but permanent relief from poverty to deserving young students. I wish the person that sent that money could know how much good it has done and is now doing, and what fervent prayers were sent out to the donor. Now, the reason I have spoken of this is that some one mentioned here, this afternoon, something about our community movement as if connected with the new thought movement. Let me now disabuse your mind of this entirely. The community movement is a purely humane movement. Religion enters into it only in so far as each one's individual opinion is concerned.

"In my efforts in this direction, I am not doing it to insure my salvation, or through any fear of any kind; nor am I seeking any reward here or hereafter. If I were a rank atheist I should do the same. It is prompted by love, pure and simple, and a real desire to help the unfortunate. As to going down into the slums to Christianize those living there, let those that have the power, find employment for the poor and see that they are decently housed; and the poor will take care of themselves. It is opportunity that most of these people need. You can carry to them all the religion you like and it is a physical impossibility for them to be happy while they are suffering the pangs of hunger and cold.

"There have been times that I have reproached myself for the pleasure I took in my work, and the thought came to me that it ought to be a sacrifice in the old, orthodox

way of thinking. I had always heard so much about the sacrifice of Jesus. I thought a great deal about it, and now I don't think Jesus made any sacrifice. I don't believe that when He was teaching the people or trying to uplift humanity, that He had any desire to do or be anything other than what He was. He was fulfilling His mission; as He said, doing His Father's work. He was the greatest humanitarian that ever lived. He could not have done other than He did do. He was eventually sacrificed, but I do not believe He made any sacrifice. As to going down into the slums and living as Jesus did and there walking in His steps, do you know, Jesus did not live that way; that you would not find His footsteps there if you went. His dust-stained feet—He got them under the blue dome of heaven in His Father's free air. He breathed the sweet air of Galilee. He bathed His feet in the sweet water of the Jordan. How much easier it is to worship God and fast in a wilderness with the mighty dome of heaven above, and room to breathe the night airs and feel the cooling dews descend upon one than to fast for forty days and forty nights hemmed in by brick walls, fetid with the breath of people in a foul atmosphere, loaded with curses. A manger in a stable would be heaven beside these human hives. Could Jesus have dwelt there? His last supper was taken under the cool shade of the trees. He was even crucified where He had room and could look up to the blue sky and there read His Father's message. And the angels of heaven could come to Him without soiling their wings. He never knew permanent hunger, except what He imposed upon Himself. But think of the people in the slums, who have never known anything else; who never get out to breathe the sweet air. Think of the women, the mothers, who are crucified daily, whose agony does not end in seven hours

nor in seven years. I have known people to go alone and concentrate their minds in prayer, dwelling on the crucifixion, living it all over again in imagination until they were ill. In my opinion, Jesus would have been better pleased in the expending those prayers in an energy and leading the multitude *out,* down by the sea as He did. There He fed them and there He taught them. These are my opinions. I don't claim infallibility. I give them to you for what they are worth."

What a commotion her words caused!—especially the closing remarks on the life and teaching of Jesus. The heavenly light came into her eyes and a glow in her cheeks. Her voice thrilled every one with its tenderness. There was nothing in her remarks to cause tears. Yet there were tears in many eyes, when she had finished. This rational, humane, beautiful, loving woman was so lifted up that she drew all to her.

It turned out to be like an old-fashioned, Methodist love-feast. No one, who heard her, was satisfied until they had clasped her hand. How the stock of the new company sold! Every single share was taken.

The next morning, what was the amazement of the "Trinity," on looking over their sheaves of daily papers, to find that the meeting of the day previous, had been reported in most of them, and with many exaggerations and positive untruths. One report was boldly illustrated. Only one article was signed; but in that and in one of the others, as in the short notices, the "Trinity" read the finger-marks and influence of Horace Burt.

It is well to read these reports that the reader may learn how differently people look on the same thing.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

NEWSPAPER CRITICISM.

REPORT OF HORACE BURT.

"YESTERDAY, with a few other alien souls, I was allowed to enter the inner circle, the Holy of holies, as it were, of the latest society fad—metaphysical charity and philanthropy. There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamed of in your philosophy. The truth of these lines was verified yesterday by unique specimens of philanthropy. Mrs. Charles Thornton, who is the wife of one of our Congressmen, and who is one of the most distinguished leaders in the younger set of the Four Hundred, seeemed to be the high priestess and leader of the movement. She is said to be, and justly too, one of the handsomest, if not *the* handsomest woman in America. She seems to possess a peculiar power over her disciples, which comprise both sexes. She is possessed of a bewildering lot of morbid, metaphysical fancies. She made an address and talked about love and the beauties of it, maintaining that the whole of metaphysics is contained in that one word, *Love*. . . . .

"She talked about the inner being, vibration, mind-force, soul-harmony, silence, and the power of thought. It was all very beautiful, to hear the musical voice and to look at

the woman; but passing moments brought reflection. I felt I was not there to witness an exhibition of beauty, but to obtain facts. I put aside the delicious languor of the atmosphere, and the exquisite beauty of the woman, and determined to look upon this wise and imposing (?) body critically; and to learn, if possible, what they were really trying to do. And I discovered they were discussing subjects with which they were acquainted and subjects with which they were unacquainted. The latter being by far the most numerous, of course mostly occupied them.

"Their ideas of philanthropy are very extensive, of course, and in the abstract are wonderful; but in the concrete are chimerical. Their metaphysical philosophy is on a par with their philanthropy. Everybody knows that philosophical accuracy is indispensable. A name or a few vague expressions do not tell what a thing is. Now, with this leading idea in our minds, namely: philosophical accuracy, we determined to get at the root of the thing, and hoped, by easy gradation, we would arrive at the solution of the problem. Copious arguments were brought to bear, pro and con, and we listened with marked attention; but alas, alas! with ill success. We were more bewildered at the end than at the beginning. I glanced around at Mrs. Thornton's disciples. To look at their faces one would think that they had some telegraphic communication direct with the heavenly land, they appeared so satisfied as they listened to this jargon, which gives a pleasant sensation to the ear. . . . . It's the easiest thing in life to bamboozle people, providing you look wise and use as weapons of instrumentation a lot of high sounding words and vague metaphysical terms. These form a wonderful vehicle for ambiguous expressions. Tangibilities become useless, comparisons of no avail. And so, this woman talked and pretended to analyze and poured forth a con-

tinuous chain of tender and impassioned sentiment about beauty, charity, a great over-flowing of soul and exuberance of love. They assume to think and feel and deal with action and emotion; but form and substance are beyond them. They may be metaphysicians, but they are not philosophers. . . . .

"We were sorry to see there those whom we consider our shining lights, running after these strange gods and taking part in this folly. There were those present who are undoubtedly ladies and gentlemen in the world of fashion, and who have money and to spare, frittering away their time in a drawing-room, sitting on easy chairs in a perfumed atmosphere, discussing maps, plans, etc., with pretty little wrinkles in their brows, brought there no doubt, by their ponderous thinking on the mighty (?) subject; meantime in the slums they are suffering the pangs of hunger while these charming creatures loll in easy chairs and sip tea from bits of translucent china.

" . . . They think it a weakness to exhibit a little human passion, and there was a lack of that deep and fervent interest in humanity so absolutely necessary in work of this kind. There was little real feeling for the naked and distressed in these demonstrations. I suppose they feel abundantly repaid; but from my soul I pity them. As a descendant of the Puritans and the best forms of orthodoxy, I write this in the nature of a protest against the imposition of obtaining money in this way. The whole thing was absurd. In connection with their philanthropy, they talked of roses and vines and culture, when it is *bread* the poor need; *bread* and something to sustain life. What do those in the slums care for vines and flowers? Flowers are not life to them.

"In this atmosphere there was nothing to move the heart to penitence and prayer, nothing to bring to the

mind the groans and sighs of the Great Master. One good true Christian woman, president of one of the most beneficial aid societies in the city, was present. This woman told them a few good wholesome truths and showed them the practical side of true charity. She is also a millionaire; but there was a great contrast between this earnest worker and the birds of Paradise that surrounded her. . . . .

"Just as the meeting broke up, we overheard one of the men, who seemed to be prime minister, speaking of the poor in the slums, and calling them 'poor devils.' We could not help but contrast this with what the charming lady had said about love and we thought how different the Great Master would have spoken.

"This same gentleman, after talking about aiding the poor, had stated the fact that these homes must be bought and paid for. Then he talked about the rates of interest, showing the whole thing to be a money-making scheme; and that they want to read their title clear to a large percentage.

"We know the thing cannot and will not last. We already have had a superabundance of gilt-edged *couleur de rose* thought-effusion. We prefer the full allowance of cut-and-thrust, blue, hell-fire, bue-blazing melodramaticisms of the old fashion Methodist, or the Salvation Army, with their drums and tambourines and cymbals. The twaddle called 'higher thought,' 'silent thought,' 'soul communion,' we have had more than enough, a nauseating surfeit. Of all this, *eheu jam salis!*"

AN EXTRACT FROM MRS. WINSTON'S REPORT.

". . . . . From what we could learn of the philanthropic project, it seemed to be stupendous in its power to relieve the congestion of our overcrowded districts and

to be able to confer a lasting benefit on those that will be allowed to avail themselves of its benefit. It is my advice and earnest hope that all those interested in this line of work, will look carefully and painstakingly into the working of this new project, as I feel confident the question of how to permanently help the unfortunately poor has been solved. It certainly receives our warmest commendation.

"We have not studied along these occult lines, but there were many interesting things mentioned that found an echo in our heart from a similarity of incidence we have taken no account of before, which, on reflection, seem remarkable. Upon the whole, we would not be surprised if they became indisputable facts. They seem so now—put forth with such genius and painstaking purpose. It will certainly be a pleasure to honor these delightful arguments, and not to let them pass as undigested and cursory remarks. We will now be eager for more proof, more explanation, and we postpone all further comment until a more mature thought. . . . .

"Upon the whole, we look upon Mrs. Thornton as one of the grandest women of our nation; and she is still so young, so original, so earnest, with so much pure, deep feeling. She has a freshness of spirit that constantly delights and surprises. With such attributes what a delight to honor her. . . . . "

EXTRACT FROM MISS PATTON'S LETTER.

". . . . . .The subject was mentality, and was embellished with numerous vague terms which greatly enhanced the interest of the talk. The subject was handled with great tact and ability, and interspersed with interrogations from the disciples of this cult.

"The wonders and architecture of the address transcended imagination. How this fair lady obtained all this wonderful knowledge, we are unable to say. It may seem severe, but the whole thing was a lot of demi-intellectual twaddle.

"It's very nice and less distressing to discuss philanthropic plans in an elegantly furnished drawing-room than to go out in frost and snow and distribute clothing and food. Could we transpose these exotics to the slums, would their identity be lost? We think not. There would be a call for cologne and violet, and my lady would lift her silken skirts for fear of contamination. Would they go down into the slums and convert those sodden sinners?—or try to save their souls? In these refined homes what do they know about those that suffer the severest privations that poverty can inflict? Could they take deeply to heart the awful want, the heart-rending despair, that melts the truly sympathetic soul? They must first learn lessons of humility and self-sacrifice.

"The truly good, those that have dedicated their lives to this work, and who are not following a fad, require no sentimental talk and outward show to influence and rouse their imaginations, or to cause their tears to flow in sympathy. Their own souls are always gushing forth in divine love for the wretched. They *do* for the poor. They don't sit down and *think* about them and leave them alone in their desolate homes. Will *they* go where the sound of woe comes forth from the fallen? No, they will laugh and *think* and *love* and leave them to their sufferings.

"But this is not all. It is a crying sin that all these erroneous ideas should be inculcated in the minds of these young people. They should get their knowledge of religion from one well-grounded in the Bible, and not a few cursory remarks, gilded with brilliant rhetoric, from a

beautiful society woman, dressed in frills and furbelows.

"If they could only realize they are dipping in deep waters and drifting toward a dangerous reef! *Thought* will not save them. The time will come when the rich, these mighty people in their splendid homes, will crouch—crouch like worms and acknowledge their own insignificance. Their ideas of philanthropy are too supremely ridiculous for serious consideration. The effect of such effort and blundering is to dampen the ardor of people who are honestly trying to aid the unfortunate. Their schemes look well on paper, but would be of no practical value. It is absurd to think that there is any real life in the movement. It will die with the season like a fading flower. We have been greatly disappointed. We had hoped to be spiritually and mentally uplifted by some real good done.

"'BIRDIE PATTON.'"

CHARLES DIXON'S REPORT.

"Out of the storm and stress of life, out and away from faults and follies, how grateful it was to come into this home, to find an atmosphere redolent with perfume, and to meet such a woman as Mrs. Thornton, whose very handclasp is an inspiration. Here, we found the most charming assemblage of ladies and gentlemen. The very atmosphere and everything in the room seemed to stimulate one to his very best. There was no restraint. It was more like a social visit, and yet, one did not feel inclined to speak hastily. One felt like giving every syllable his best thought.

"Mrs. Thornton made a brief address in which she outlined the philanthropic work in which she was interested. What struck us most was the splendid harmony of the woman. She is, in herself, a symphony. There were no

dry-as-dust details, but everything strong, straight and practical. She has a way of telling so plainly and lucidly everything one wants to know.

"At the request of many, she gave a brief review of her metaphysical studies. This metaphysical theme is purity itself. Every idea was put forth in a thoughtful manner, and advanced by such a woman as Mrs. Thornton, it was singularly effective. The study of metaphysics, as we understand it, is founded on the teachings of Christ, who was the greatest of all metaphysicians. Yet, metaphysics and orthodoxy are as wide asunder as the poles. There were no 'holier than thou' ideas advanced, no heart-rending appeal. The gaunt skeleton of Fear was conspicuously absent. There was no apparent striving after effect or perfection—everything broad and liberal, no selfishness of a cramped soul. I became inspired and felt all the time there was some precious goal about to be reached. I candidly confess the whole thing was a revelation, and I have never been so surprised.

"Prejudices are devilish; and I am ashamed to acknowledge it, but I went there prejudiced. I had said to myself: 'Can anything good come out of Sodom?' But very soon I was willing to suspend judgment, at least, and await developments.

"I have seen philanthropists who made me nervous with their tireless activity. But how different here! How quietly and harmoniously all was done and how much accomplished! Plans were laid out, maps were shown, money was freely offered, but not one cent asked for. There was an entertainment conceived, planned, and date set for it, in less than twenty minutes. I never saw so much effective work done in the same space of time.

"Nothing was done or talked about except from a humane standpoint—just what one, true, kind heart would

wish to extend to another; no air of conciliating some deity or of the hope of buying off judgment on some secret sin. There seemed to be but one deity present, and that was the God of Love, not the little, slick, lying, wicked Cupid, but the great human and divine love that must permeate all good.

"From what we can learn, this philanthropic work is no dream; but a marvelous reality that has been thoughtfully tested. Next week we are to visit the community now in operation, and we are all impatience for the time to come.

"All honor to these people who from their homes of plenty in the great world of fashion, find time to think of those less fortunate than themselves.

"We will follow this movement with interest, and we feel sure that through it, thousands of lives will be made brighter and happier."

* * * * * * * *

To say that Donald, Dick, and Bennie were *mad,* after reading these reports, would be drawing it mild. Donald said but little, but gnawed his moustache fiercely. Dick looked unutterable things. When Bennie came in he fairly stamped with rage. This was the first absolutely disagreeable thing they had met since they had gone into this new work. When Dick had made known his project to a few personal friends, he had been able to interest them without much difficulty, and they had invested liberally. It is true that all three were beginning to be chaffed a good deal at the club; but they did not mind it in the least and looked upon it as a joke. Nor did they care, now, so far as they were personally concerned. It was the dragging into publicity the names of Mrs. Thornton and her associates in this movement that incensed them.

"Talk about atmosphere," said Dick. "I never appre-

ciated it until yesterday. Those people hardly entered the room before I felt it, and I have felt it ever since. Once, I would not have understood it. Sometimes I have wondered why Mrs. Thornton kept silent in regard to her projects for five years. But after yesterday's experience, and this morning's, I don't wonder at it any more."

They had already arranged to meet the three girls, that morning, at Mrs. Thornton's.

When they arrived, they saw at once that the ladies had read the articles; but Mary was inclined to make light of them.

Not so, Dick. He was furious. He felt that it was a burning disgrace and a slur on Mrs. Thornton, and did not hesitate to accuse Horace Burt.

Mary tried to put a happy light upon the matter and quoted from the Persian sage:

"'The secret of wisdom dwells with silence.' This old philosopher knew so much! He did not mean by being still, nonchalance of life, nor a lotus-eating existence. But he knew that arguments were disturbing. If this is so, *be still,* and let the world pass by like idle sounds. Be still and know that all Horace Burt can write, can be overbalanced by your mind."

"That may be true," replied Dick; "but at this moment, I would rather use my fist or a horsewhip."

"The world judges a tree by its fruit," said Mary.

"Well, his fruit is not ripe, yet," replied Dick, as he walked across the room with his hands buried in his pockets that Mary should not see how tightly they were clenched. He walked to the window and stood looking out, for a moment, while he held a little soliloquy about *damns* of several kinds. It is only those that are just beginning to make efforts to obtain ideas that can appreciate Dick's feeling. He wanted to strike out from the shoulder.

"Come, come! we will be able to hold our own," said Mary cheerfully. "Just look at it the right way, and it will all grow bright."

"That makes me think of those verses of Swinburne you repeated for us, the other day, Mrs. Thornton," said Edith. "I thought them so beautiful I looked them up and learned them, and they were a genuine comfort to me yesterday."

Edith was standing some distance from the rest of the group, leaning against the mantel. When Dick heard her speaking, he had come to the other side of the mantel, and stood facing her.

"What were they?" said Donald. "I feel, just at this moment, as if we needed something for our overcharged feelings. I have just enough Southern blood in me to cause my fingers to itch for a shot-gun this morning."

Mary smiled encouragingly as she said to Edith: "If you have any oil to pour, now is your time to do it."

"Come, let us have the verses," said Bennie. "All of you."

"All right," said Edith, "and I advise you all to learn them. I shall feel I am doing a real missionary work if you do."

"Consider us all pledged!" exclaimed Donald.

There were two stanzas of six lines each. Mary had only repeated ten lines, leaving off the last two, and Edith followed her example.

Swinburne was somewhat of a favorite with Dick, and he listened with interest while Edith repeated the lines with glowing cheeks and flashing eyes:

"'No grim thing written or graven,
But grows, if you gaze on it, bright.
A lark's note rings from a raven,
And Tragedy's robe turns white;
And shipwrecks drift into haven;
And darkness laughs and is light.

"'Grief seems but a vision of madness,
Life's keynote peals from above,
With naught in it more of sadness
Than broods on the heart of a dove.'"

"How beautiful!" they all exclaimed. But Dick leaned toward Edith, and said:

"That is fine, and witchingly recited. I did not know you were possessed of such elocutionary power; but why did you not finish it? Shall I do it for you?" And without waiting for her to reply, he repeated:

"'At sight of you, thought grows gladness,
And life through love of you, love.'"

She glanced at him. His voice thrilled her, she knew not why. And as Dick looked into her eyes, for the first instant, he realized that he loved her. The others were talking and had taken no notice of what had transpired between these two.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

DICK SHOWS HIS METTLE.

THAT evening, Dick had an engagement at the club, to talk the matter of the community plan over with some parties that he hoped to interest. He had, in a great measure, regained his wonted humor. The three of them had concluded to swallow their wrath, on account of the ladies, as it would not be pleasant to have them mixed up in anything of the kind.

Donald and Bennie, with their friends, were already at the club, when Dick arrived. They gathered round a table where Dick joined them. The room was brilliantly lighted. There happened to be a full attendance that night, very many of the older members being present. On every side were the scions of the wealthy millionaires, many of whom showed their patrician blood, all lounging about, chatting.

Near where our three friends sat, was a group, among whom was Horace Burt; and the three at the table were evidently the subject of conversation, together with their philanthropic movement; as such fragments of the conversation were wafted to them, as follows:

"Ah! she's devilish pretty—by Allah!" evidently referring to Mary.

"Yes, ah, yes! She's fit for something better than metaphysics—by Jupiter!"

They had both been reading *Quo Vadis.*

"A yacht with prayer-meetings on it!" This brought a roar.

"Dick has 'got religion,'" came with a sneer from some one else.

"Kid-glove religion and philanthropy are beautiful."

Dick was not sensitive; he had been a leader too long, and his will had been law. When he wanted to do a thing, he did it, and paid no attention to what was done or said about it. He knew how the fellows were always chaffing one another; and in that group were some that he thought well of.

"It's a lot of scandalous enthusiasm. It doesn't catch me."

"It's an attack of Mary-mania meta-phobia," said some one.

"Yes; Dick has shown his anatomy is not so deficient in heart as we supposed," said Horace Burt. "In plain English, it's a case that Judge Thornton should look into. Dick has Mary-mania, sure enough."

Dick sprang to his feet at the insinuation. He had a strong face, and, for an instant, his jaws were shut like steel. He stood for a couple of breathless seconds before speaking. Then a torrent of words poured forth.

"I have not thought, until this moment, that the hot-shot fired into me, heretofore, meant anything more than a joke—a lot of chaff; but taking into consideration the unwarrantable attack in this morning's papers,—instigated by a member of this club—on the movement we are trying to promote, together with the remarks I have heard during the last five minutes, convince me that they *are* intended as something more than a joke. It is not the first time

that a snake entered an Eden, nor the first time that a Judas sat with the disciples to betray them. Is any man here my keeper? No grinning vertebrate, no handful of nerveless protoplasm can scare me with his pen or brazen assumption. I am in the habit of doing as I please, and I expect to continue in that line of conduct. There is no social autocrat in New York nor enough sneers in the world, to change my purpose, or make me swerve one inch from what I have undertaken. I bow my head in authority to no one. I intend to do what I believe to be right and will not subordinate my views to anybody."

There was an instant's surprise, and then a storm of applause. His voice was like thunder as he went on:

"I protest in the name of good works; I protest in the name of common decency; I protest in the name of the purest and best of womanhood against such remarks as have been heard here to-night. And I appeal to every honest man in this club to back me in it."

The token of approbation with which his sentiments were received, was attested to by another storm of applause.

"Some one, a few moments ago, sneeringly said I had 'got religion.' Suppose I have? We are supposed to live in a Christian country. Is it a disgrace to 'get religion'? Now, I boldly say I am a changed man. I didn't become changed through any prayers, psalm-singing, or through going to church; but by a simple demonstration of Truth and by seeing the error of my ways; for I *was* going wrong. I am positive in the common acceptance of the word, I have not 'got religion.' But I want to say right here—by the eternal!—if it *is* religion, I'm glad I've got it; and my regret is that I did not have it sooner; and I need to be an enthusiast in order to make up for lost time."

All the latent energy of the man had burst forth. He

electrified every one. His eyes blazed until they fairly shot fire. He was pale as death. His words came in a torrent. *Bravos* rang out repeatedly at Dick's spirited utterances.

"As for the work we have in hand, *I* am willing to stand sponsor to the movement. No one need fear they will be called upon to father it. I am proud of it, and decided it for myself." (Laughter and applause.) "And the project has come to stay. It cannot be frozen out—nor kicked out. It is growing fast and will continue to grow in spite of foes without and foes within. So far, it does not bear the unhappy resemblance to a failure. I do not intend to criticise other people's methods; but I wish to speak of what these ladies are doing. They are not rending the air with shouts and prayers, nor building churches to be used once a week; but they are building towns and giving the unfortunate people an opportunity to help themselves. And I want to put myself on record, right now, as favoring and co-operating to the extent of my ability with them. As to the slur in regard to Mrs. Thornton, I have that same love and reverence for her that I suppose a good Catholic has for his own saint by the name of Mary. It was Mrs. Thornton that awakened me out of my idleness and sloth when I was weary and almost tired of life. It is she, that to me has made life worth living. I revere her as all that is good in pure womanhood."

Bennie, Donald, Brinsley and many others sprang to their feet, followed by almost every member of the club, and the place shook with applause.

God! If you could have seen this man. It was a revelation. The idea of any one ever having called him dispassionate, unemotional, cold! He was an avalanche. His nostrils dilated, his nerves were thrilling. He was quivering with honest indignation. Dick, himself, did

not know how much character he possessed. This was the first real opposition or criticism he had ever been subjected to.

After all, it was a glorious experience; for it resulted in attracting to him others as fearless as himself. All his latent capacity and his true metal were seen for the first time. His victory was complete. The club was in a tumult. Horace Burt tried to speak, but he was drowned by a storm of hisses. Dick saw his victory and was satisfied.

Dick had shown and somewhat explained the project to Colonel Storr, one of the millionaires of New York. He happened to be at the club this eventful evening. He was considered a man of remarkably clear judgment and of great power. All eyes were turned toward him, as he now rose and said:

"Mr. Braintree's indignation is just, and I am glad he has the courage to stand for his principles. I have looked over these plans with him, and it is plain to see they are not the result of accident, but a careful working out of a method, with much thought and care. No man has a right to say, merely from a glance over the field, that the project is not a good one. I understand that it has been tried on a small scale for some years; and that it has proved successful and highly practical. Having been fully tested, the results are shown, and surely, they are very gratifying. I feel there is quite a powerful generalship back of the movement, which deserves encouragement; therefore, it would not be wise to toss it to one side uninvestigated. I should like to see this large, opulent club made a rallying-ground, and enough members come forward and join hands to make defeat impossible.

"This is a year of great prosperity. An appeal among the rank and file of the wealthier people I am sure would

find quick response, if it could be shown that their money would do some permanent good, and that it would not be like pouring water into a sieve; that they could help people, by some rational means, to sustain themselves. Many people are sincerely earnest in their desire to aid. Yearly evidences multiply, showing that our charity is only to be repeated to the same people, year after year: that apparently all the thousands given, do no permanent good. To anything that will consistently solve this problem, I will give my cordial support.

"As to Mrs. Thornton, I think she is on the right path in this higher effort she is making. She seems to be a sort of John the Baptist crying in the wilderness of society. I understand a good many have joined her ranks. Most of us know her. She is a woman beyond reproach—a woman whose very person seems to exhale chastity."

Mr. Naigie, a well-known man and one of the most popular of the elder members of the club, spoke next. His face was seamed with thought-lines; but there was a merry twinkle in his brown eyes, as he said:

"The argument that this movement can be like an endless chain, going on and building up, is a strong inducement for co-operation. As our friend, Colonel Storr, has said, temporary charity is so discouraging; and I am sure the number that would bestir themselves in a concrete movement for the relief of the suffering, would astonish any true philanthropist if it can be demonstrated a permanent thing.

"I heard a sneer about kid gloves, a little while ago. I believe there were kid gloves in this club that were found at their post of duty in our recent troubles. Mr. Braintree was, at that time, in Russia, watching at the bedside of a dying sister, or, from what I have seen of him to-

night, I fancy he would have been found at the front with the other kid gloves." (Loud applause.)

Mr. Naigie took Dick by the hand.

"Let me congratulate you, young man; but let me tell you, you have missed your vocation. You should have been in Congress. It is a great pity you were not born poor," said he smilingly.

Another of the elder members, Mr. Fellows, congratulated Dick and said:

"But, my dear boy, did you not expect this? Did you not know in taking a step of this kind that it would furnish material for a tremendous sensation?"

"No, I did not give it a second's thought in that light."

After all, Dick had a great deal of simplicity of mind.

"I suppose you thought you only had to mention it at the club and the thing was done. You thought it would be a lark. It shows what a really good fellow you are."

"I supposed people would attend to their own business, at least, and allow me the same privilege. I have spent immense sums of money on my stable, my yacht, my country-places, yet no one has seemed to think anything of it; and if I should double my expenses that I now have I presume it would be all right. But as soon as I take up this kind of work, I am assailed by supercilious criticism. However, I don't mind it now."

"Of course you don't. I guess your religion is all right," said Mr. Fellows. "A man's religion should be a religion of conduct, of intelligence. Therefore," said he, turning to Mr. Naigie, "I rather think our friend has religion, or rather, always had it."

"I would like very much to interest you two gentlemen," said Dick with a quizzical smile. "I know you haven't much money to invest, but your influence, your judgment, and advice would be invaluable, and much appreciated."

These two men were men of fame, both colossal in business, and capable of making wonderfully bold strokes, the results of which generally justified their methods. Their keen business sense was marvelous. No wonder Dick was anxious to receive the co-operation of such financial giants.

"I wouldn't mind taking a hundred dollars or so worth of stock in this company," said Mr. Fellows stroking his chin thoughtfully, with an assumed gravity; "but I don't want my little contribution trifled with or thrown away by red tape. I want to know a little more of this, to have a little confidence."

"I feel much the same way," replied Mr. Naigie, his eyes twinkling. "I also have a few dollars, that with a little effort and self-denial, I might spare. It would be a sacrifice, I confess; but still I would be willing to make it for a growing cause of this kind."

At this moment, Colonel Storr, who had been talking to Bennie and Donald, called order and asked Dick to give as concise an explanation of the project as possible, adding:

"That is the best way to find out about the merits of this work."

Dick was soon lost in the pleasure of explaining and extolling the merits of his plans. He became eloquent.

"I like this young gladiator," laughed Mr. Fellows to Mr. Naigie.

"So do I; he is bold, impassioned—in fact, colossal," replied Mr. Naigie. "I am proud of him. I am glad we discovered him. It wouldn't surprise me if he immortalized himself. Young Gordon and Barry are in this thing up to their elbows. But Braintree is the leader; he has the most cash, though none of them can complain on that score."

Dick, after telling what had been accomplished at

Goluckie, wound up by showing the full diagram of Shamrock, the extensive plan they were now working on, and offering to take any number out there that desired to go to inspect the place; and stated that they were now getting the families in. Then, he showed the charter of the new colony, and how the stock had all been taken and chiefly by young men.

Mr. Fellows and Mr. Naigie were both surprised at the amount of work that had already been accomplished. They began to feel that they would have to bestir themselves if they kept pace with this young gladiator that had sprung suddenly into life.

Colonel Storr said: "The more I see of this the more I am convinced that Mrs. Thornton has worked out a problem that will be a power for good—that is almost incalculable—a mine that will be well worth working."

He introduced a set of resolutions, calling for co-operation in the new project. The resolution was adopted by a rising vote, nearly every person in the club standing.

There were many points discussed and explained, several suggestions made and indorsed. A committee was appointed of which Dick was chairman, to define the best plan of going to work.

Dick found himself in a peculiar position before he was through, but he had done effective work.

As Dick drove up Fifth Avenue with Mr. Naigie and Mr. Fellows, he was saying:

"I don't feel called upon to give an account of my doings and motives to any one; but as you have shown as much interest in our efforts, I am going to talk freely and frankly with you. I am worth over fifty million dollars. Now, I cannot use that money, nor can those coming after me, unless we squander it. I have been asking myself the question, When people have enough

what do they want with more? Now, I have seen too much of poverty to want to subject myself or mine to it. But I do not believe I have a right to selfishly hoard up my money, just for the distinction of being called one of the richest young men in America. And that is about all it amounts to. As yet, I have done little real philanthropic work. But from the little I have done, I have received more genuine pleasure than from anything I have ever done. As I entered the club, the other day, I presume I had been the subject of conversation; for I heard one man say:

"'Oh, never mind! Braintree always planks the pewter.' And that is about the only thing I have been noted for—to plank the pewter. And the parasites that have received the benefits would be the first to find fault should I discontinue to plank it. Now, the money I have, my father and his father before him worked hard for. I am not going to become a quixotic crank and try to feel I have no right to it; and give it away. But I am going to give the *use* of the bulk of it to those less fortunate than myself. I am going to put a large portion of it into a working fund. I shall charge just enough interest to save leakage, and if God spares my life, I hope to see, before I die, that this money has enabled thousands of people to obtain homes for themselves and families. I do not intend to wait until I am dead and leave it for some one else to manage and fight over; but I shall look after it myself. I shall devote my life to it. I shall arrange it so that those coming after me can withdraw such amounts as are needed if necessity compels them. But I hope that that may never happen, but, while belonging to me or my descendants, it may go on and on aiding and helping others. I have perfect faith in this project. I have subjected it to the criticism of the most

practical men, and they agree with me that it can be made almost perfect. I have men, now, in the West and Middle States looking for locations, practical men who are looking at it from a purely business and humane standpoint. And I have the most encouraging letters. Judge Thornton is co-operating with me, and he says the land can be purchased at a low figure in the West. The only difficulty is the droughts, which sometimes come; but that can be overcome by irrigation, and if the means of irrigation are once provided, there is never a failure of crops, which is far better than to depend upon rains. He is going to see what can be done in the way of securing government lands. He is a worker from 'way back," laughed Dick, as he bade them good-night and stepped from the carriage at his own door.

* * * * * * * *

Colonel Brandt happened into the club just a few moments before Dick had sprung to his feet to resent the insinuation of Horace Burt. He was standing near the door talking to a friend. He heard Dick's torrent of words and Colonel Storr's remarks. Then, he left the club as he had an engagement that he could not afford to break.

Colonel Brandt was a busy man. He paid no attention to social matters except in a general way. He was proud of his handsome wife and daughters. He left all social and domestic affairs to them. The past few months he had been compelled to be away from home a good deal. He had been to the Pacific coast, two or three times, and to Europe on business. So, he had had little time to know really what was going on in society circles. He only knew, in a vague way, that his daughters were interested in some charitable movement. He did not even know, as yet, the extent of Edith's subscription. But

the scene at the club kept recurring to him and he wondered if Edith had anything to do with it.

Dick had been a revelation to him, and he thought he had never heard anything so impassioned. But he did not fancy his daughter's name being bandied about the club. True, he had not heard it. Yet, instinctively, he felt it was something with which she was connected.

It was late when he returned home, and his wife had retired for the night. The next morning, when he came down to his breakfast, he inquired for his daughters, and found they had gone out.

He turned to his wife and asked: "What is all this commotion about charity?" And he related to her the scene at the club.

Mrs. Brandt then told him everything, how Edith had determined to go down to teach in the slums and of the dreadful scene they had. Then she laid Mary's letter in his hands. He read it through carefully.

"Did Mary Thornton write that letter?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Brandt, "and it was the only thing that kept Edith from carrying out her resolution. I had no influence with her whatever."

"Well, by the eternal! Mary Thornton ought to have a dozen daughters."

Mrs. Brandt told him something of the community movement, of Dick, Donald, and Bennie being interested in it, and added:

"As early as it is, they are off to Mrs. Thornton's this morning."

"Those three fellows are the cream of our young men, and I was proud of Dick last night. The club fairly trembled and he carried every one with him. I think I'll drop into the Thorntons on my way down town," said the colonel as he arose from the breakfast table.

It did not take long for Colonel Brandt's trained eye to take in the advantages of the community movement. After congratulating Dick on his conquest of the night previous, he turned to Mary and said, as he took her hand:

"Your genius in originating this plan, deserves a patent of nobility. From things that have come to me, I think I can trust you to fix the matter in any shape you like. I confess," laughed he, "I feel quite unable to make a suggestion. Only remember me by putting me down for one million dollars."

Mary was taken by surprise at such a munificent subscription, and she turned to Edith, who had heard what her father said, and exclaimed:

"Do you hear that?"

Edith said: "But, papa, you don't know my other subscriptions to the churches," and she told him.

He looked at her a moment, then laughed and said:

"Edith, a duke will never do for you. You must marry a prince!" and he continued, turning to Mary: "I don't withdraw my contribution. It is a charity I will gladly aid."

"But, papa, it's not a gift, it's a loan."

"No matter the name you call it by. I am going to *give* this; and want it put into a perpetual fund, dedicated to a woman with a level head," laughed the colonel as he took his departure.

The following Sunday, at the close of his sermon, the Rev. Dr. Heber laid before his congregation the project they had in hand, and much surprised the majority of them by saying that the greater part of the stock had been sold. He told who was the originator of the plan, also, that in attempting to establish a community in connection with his church, how quickly and generously the people of great wealth had responded. Then he said:

"Was it the slave that pulled himself out of bondage into freedom? No; it was the humane Garrison, the aristocratic Phillips. Will it be the slum-dweller that will pull himself out of the slums? No; it will be the humane patricians of our land, who are not content to dwell in luxury while the people are groaning under the stress of poverty. These beautiful-souled women are working from a purely humane standpoint. They have put aside creeds and dogmas, and wish to dwell only in the spirit of love and brotherhood. Shall we do less than they? We will not. For it is the only, true religion."

CHAPTER XL.

EDITH LEARNS HER MISTAKE.

EDITH BRANDT was much changed since the morning she sat at breakfast at Willowby Rest Hotel. She was far from happy. She had not only refused the renewed suit of the duke, but had positively declined all other proffers for her hand. Edith was convinced that her heart was broken. She had been subject to one or two unpleasant experiences through the winter. She had heard herself discussed by the duke and one of his titled friends, one night at a ball, where she happened to be sitting alone, ensconced from view.

A great beauty from the West was in New York, and had created quite a sensation by her magnificent toilets and her display of wealth. She was enormously rich and it was said that her ancestors had been mighty brewers. The two gentlemen were discussing Edith and this lady.

"Now that you have missed with Miss Brandt, why don't you try for this one? She has the beauty and the rocks, and that's what we want."

"Yes, it is what we want, and what we must have. That's what we are here for," laughed the duke with brutal frankness. "But we want to get all we can for our pre-

cious selves. The other one,"—meaning Edith—"has beauty and money and is a Vere de Vere."

"While this one is only a Beer de Beer," laughed his friend; "but I fancy you could manage her more easily than your Vere de Vere, who is proud and haughty as the devil."

"That's where she shows her blood and why I liked her. I would have risked taming her if I could have won her," said his grace as they passed on.

How Edith's cheeks burned. She felt as if she could never love any man after this experience.

It was only a few days after the ball when the little episode of her reciting the poem in Mary's drawing-room took place. Dick's voice had thrilled her, and she found herself feeling angry that even momentarily it should have affected her. That there had been any significance to Dick in the lines that he had repeated, did not once occur to her. She knew Dick was artistic. She knew he admired her in a general way; and it was a very common thing for him to show his approval of her tasteful toilets, and unconsciously she had become accustomed to asking herself, when she was dressed for some special occasion:

"I wonder if he will like this effect of my gown;" and to be surprised and disappointed if he took no notice.

Since the morning she had repeated the verses, she began to notice a marked change in Dick. He seemed more quiet and thoughtful, but at the same time very gentle and tender toward her. She was aware that he knew of her disappointment in the duke, and she felt his consideration toward her was largely due to this knowledge. She appreciated it very much, as she felt sore and bruised from her recent experiences. She really began to feel that she was leaning on him for mental support.

Colonel Brandt had given his daughters a vivid de-

scription of the scene at the club. He admired Dick greatly and was loud in his praises.

Edith had great confidence in her father's judgment. This approval of Dick from him had strengthened her regard. And Dick, without intending it, through being interested in the same work, or something, suddenly began to realize that Edith had become a part of his life. And he realized that much that he had done had been with a thought of what *she* would think. But he felt she was not for him. He felt almost confident he could not waken her heart to love. But it had been a great source of satisfaction to him to witness the defeat of the duke.

Through the winter Charles spent every Sunday in New York. Mary also made many trips to Washington. She was frequently accompanied by Edith, who, in going with Mary had the double pleasure of being with Miss Stevens also.

Dick frequently made one of the party to Washington, as he was interested in some measures that Charles was trying to put through Congress.

Charles was fast making a record in Congress; and he caused some of his opponents uncomfortable hours. They felt that this young fellow was taking undue liberties with previous prescribed rules. They protested. Even the managers of his own party began to advise and dictate. But they soon discovered it was no use to tell him how the political machine should be run. They found he would not be an engineer for them. He had his own views and had the courage to stand by them. In spite of their fears and in the face of opposition, his views advanced from point to point without much argument and without a particle of ostentation on his part. And many were surprised to find themselves indorsing and voting on new measures put forth by this young mem-

ber—views that a short time before, they were diametrically opposed to. Suddenly they began to realize that he was one of their most capable members.

A few days after the events of our last chapter, Edith and Dick were in Washington with Mary and Charles. This visit had been made chiefly for the purpose of attending a dinner-dance at the home of the Hon. George Stevens, when the engagement of Isabel to a Colonel Evans of the regular army was to be announced.

On the evening of the dance, Mary and Charles had left the Stevens home, and had gone to attend some other function. Edith and Dick had returned to the hotel, and had taken possession of Mary's private parlor. They were seated in a luxurious "conversation chair," face to face, discussing the events of the evening together with the prospective happiness of the coming bride and groom. Edith admired Miss Stevens very much. Referring to Colonel Evans, she said, with a sigh:

"I hope he is worthy of Isabel."

"So do I," replied Dick. "She seems so happy it would be sad for such love to die."

"But that's the worst of it. Love does not always die," said Edith.

"I cannot understand that," replied Dick. "I could not love an unworthy person. If I loved I would give all; but if I found the person I loved was unworthy, my love would die. It might die hard, but it would surely die. I could not stoop to love an unworthy object."

Edith's hand was resting on the arm of the chair between them. Her eyes were downcast. She was thinking of what he had been saying. He was leaning back looking at her. She was all in shimmering white satin and lace, with diamonds gleaming from her purple-tinted

hair and on her breast. A bunch of violets was fastened at her belt and were exhaling their sweetest perfume.

"Yes," said Edith, "I know men easily forget. It doesn't seem to be hard for them to find an excuse for doing so."

Dick smiled and laying his hand lightly on hers, he said:

"It would not be easy to forget *you*. It would be easier for me to forget to breathe than to forget you."

Edith laughed a little low musical laugh as she exclaimed:

"You are incorrigible!"

"Dick sighed audibly and said: "If you could only understand!"

"I!" she exclaimed. "Oh, I understand you, of course; but sometime you may talk to those that do not understand, and that would be unfortunate. Sometimes I think you do wrong to say those frivolous things and trifle with sentiment as you do."

"I trifle? Listen to what I shall say now!"

There was a world of suppressed excitement in the voice of this strong man as he took her hand in his and said:

"Edith, do you not know that I love you? How fondly, how fervently time alone can show; for I can never find language to express it. Will you—will you be my wife?"

Edith had turned white to the lips at this abrupt avowal. She sat motionless, not even lifting her eyes. She could hardly believe her senses. Yet she knew instantly he was speaking from his heart. How tender he was! His voice had a touch of reverence in it, as if speaking to a saint.

She lifted her eyes and looked at him.

"Will you, dear?" he said leaning toward her.

"Don't, Dick, don't," she said pleadingly. "It's no use. You know all. I can never love again."

"Never, dear—never?"

"Never," she repeated, her eyes taking a grave far-away look for an instant. Then she brought them back to his face. "You would not want to marry a woman unless she loved you, would you?"

"No, I would not. Much as I love you, I would not want to marry you unless I possessed all your love, your very soul. For it is in the soul that love must have its root. I have seen too much of life, and recently have thought too deeply on these things, to ever be contented with an ordinary marriage. I must have all—or nothing. I must feel that the woman that is to be my wife and the mother of my children, must love and be satisfied that she is loved. I must not doubt the woman I love, nor must I be doubted. Such a state of existence would not enable either of us to incarnate into our children the highest ideals of manhood and womanhood. I have sins enough to answer for. I will not add that to their number. I would live alone forever rather than be allied with an alien soul, no matter how dear she might be to me. Nor could I have love consumed by social creeds and restrictions. I want no masquerades of love in my life."

Edith was perfectly silent. As she sat leaning back against the chair, a warm flush had crept into her face, and her long lashes swept her cheek concealing her downcast eyes. Dick half rose from his chair, then settled back again. He took her passive hand and pressed it to his lips and said, as he leaned toward her:

"Edith, do you know that to me you are the most beautiful woman in the world, and that your very breath is wine to me? If I knew that I could rest on your bosom and dwell in it forever, that your voice would be the first

to greet me in the morning and the last to fall upon my ears when I slept; if I could look in your eyes and read and see reflected there all that I feel for you; if I knew, dear, that I could hold you close through life, and know that when death came it was only a loosening for a day, to reclasp you on the other side, and rest your head on my bosom through all eternity, I would be content. I could bear all the ills that might come to me if I had this blessed assurance. But I see it cannot be." Again he pressed her hand to his lips.

"I will leave you now. I take it, you understand yourself, and know your own mind. I consider your answer as final. It will be a sorrow to me, but one for which I was not totally unprepared. I will never broach the subject again to you, and I presume we shall meet socially, as usual. But I want you to know this: that although I shall never speak of it again, I shall never change, nor even try to forget. I am a better man than I was, and a wiser. I have overcome much. I feel that my soul has changed. I shall try to bear this as a man should."

Again he pressed her hand to his lips. He arose and stood for an instant before her.

"Good-night, dear."

He passed back of her chair and with the utmost tenderness he rested his hand lightly on her head, for an instant, as if in silent benediction. Then the door opened and closed. He was gone. She was alone.

It was a strange wooing. Edith shivered. It seemed as if in his going, all the light in her life went out.

In the little vestibule Dick donned his overcoat, buttoned it up, put on his hat and went down and out into the night. At the foot of the steps, he stopped, took a cigar from his pocket, struck a match on the rail, lit his cigar, tossed the match aside, looked up and down the

street as if undecided; put his hands in his pocket and turned toward his hotel. Nothing frenzied about him. Again he was disappointing.

Edith sat where Dick had left her, for a few minutes. Then again she shivered as if with cold. She arose and went to her room. When she reached it, there were traces of tears on her cheek. She felt lonely, wounded, deserted. She had become used to seeing Dick and going to consult him. Everything had been going on so smoothly. Why, oh, why had he spoiled it all by proposing to her! Could she never have a friend? It was not necessary for her to be a mystic in order to know that he had spoken from his heart; no use for him to say they would meet as usual. She knew it was impossible and that all the pleasant days of going about freely with him were over. She felt she had lost him forever. There was a storm seething in her soul. She buried her face in her hands and sobbed convulsively. She almost felt that Dick was dead and buried. After awhile, she grew calmer; and she began to live over, in quick memory, the past year of her life. She recalled the meeting of the duke and what an impression he had made upon her. Then she remembered her cruel disappointment when she began to suspect his love had its inception from her father's millions, and was wholly based on covetousness, selfishness, greed and self-conceit. She remembered how her cheek had burned upon her realization that she was only a chattel, representing to him so much money. Then, in addition to this, came the shock of learning that he had a morganatic wife and several children. And she recalled how his grace had made light of this legitimate branch of English life as one of the customs of the country in which he lived. How he had declared, as if in extenuation, that this wife was a "good woman—really quite a lady;" but

that he would put her away and have nothing more to do with her. The duke's explanation had only made matters worse. In imagination, Edith pictured this woman, with her worse than fatherless children, whose weight of sorrow would touch the heart of a stone, the victim of this man's avarice and caprice.

She realized there was neither justice nor decency in such a state of affairs, nor the redeeming thought of good intention. It was deliberate and premeditated wrong. She had been horrified to find that it was the basis of many marriages in high life in England, and that American women, who had been brought up in a country where this state of things would be considered a crime, were groaning over it in secret and paying for this luxury (?) with their millions.

Edith felt it was even worse than Mormonism. In her own country she would consider even the acquaintance of a Mormon an insult. Could she condone as legitimate in England what she would consider a crime in her own country? No; she could not. The declaration of the duke that he loved her, and her alone, only brought to her mind's eye a vision of a lonely woman with her little ones gathered around her, deserted and forsaken. She determined that she would never be accessory to this sin. And she at once insisted upon returning to America. But the wound had been too deep to be healed suddenly.

Now, from the review of her acquaintance with the duke, came a vision of Dick. She remembered, when he told her of his love, that he had spoken of his children. Then, he loved her and had thought far enough ahead for that. She felt her neck, hands and face grow warm. Yet, why not? Surely, the man that could so think and choose a wife, must be beyond the ordinary. She knew he did not love her for her money. He was worth millions. She

knew how he had been sought after, knew the brilliant matches he might have made. Then it was love for her very self. She felt sure Dick would have married her had she been a peasant. Then, she recalled what he had said; that he could not love an unworthy object; that he had afterward said that he would love her always. So, he deemed she would always be worthy of love. Again her face grew hot. He was loving her as she had loved the duke; for what he believed her to be. Was she worthy of such love? For she—what was she doing? Loving a man that was a scheming trickster—a man that had tried to purloin her fortune through a pretence of love, that, instead of giving her holy, pure, honorable love, offered her palsied unhappiness.

Already, in contrasting these two men, the duke was losing; Dick was gaining. She was convinced in her own heart she could never love again; and she regretted losing her friend, who had been so much to her; and she dreaded meeting him.

The next morning Dick made his appearance. He was exactly the same as he had ever been. It was surprising. Slowly she began to realize the strength of this man.

Dick was sorry he had proposed to Edith. It had not been premeditated. He thought it all over carefully, and he had made up his mind that this blunder of his should not break up their friendly relations. He exerted himself to relieve her from all embarrassment, and, at the end of a week, he had so far succeeded that to Edith it almost seemed like a dream. She had not only regained her usual composure, but she was fast beginning to realize, as never before, that this love for the duke, or what she thought love, was really perverted imagination.

A few weeks after the visit to Washington, Mary, Edith and Dick were returning from a trip down in the tene-

ment-district. Suddenly, there was a cry of alarm, and bells began to ring wildly. The driver tried to whip up the horses and escape; but the houses seemed to instantly empty themselves of their inmates into the street, and the crowd so quickly gathered force that the carriage became wedged and had to stop. There was a deafening noise and din. The carriage was blocked just opposite a five-story tenement house that was on fire in the rear. The fire engines were on hand immediately. The firemen carried the hose round the corner of the street, trying to reach the house from the back.

Suddenly there was a glare, and a long tongue of flame darted upward, and a woman with three children appeared on the roof. She seemed in a frenzy, and took one of the children up, as if to throw it down to the crowd. Men, women, children, began to shriek and gesticulate. There was a fire-escape in front of the house; but the woman either did not know of it, or she was too frightened to make use of it.

Before Mary and Edith were aware of what he was doing, Dick had sprung out, and pulling off his top-coat, which he tossed into the carriage, he was pushing his way through the crowd to the burning house.

Shoving a barrel that stood near under the fire-escape, he mounted it, and very easily drew himself up to the ladder. He had hardly reached the top of the house, when several firemen appeared in front.

Dick took the children down, one by one, and passed them to the firemen. Then he helped down the woman. He was following her, when suddenly he stopped, as if listening, then retraced his steps a little way, and swung himself to a window that was closed. He tried to raise it and found it was fastened. He kicked it in, and, as a great volume of smoke poured out, he disappeared

within. In a moment, he emerged with a child about three years old in his arms. He was soon on the ground, amid the shouts and cheers of the crowd. Giving the child into the hands of a policeman, he pushed his way back to the carriage, into which he sprang, laughing; and with the exception of being a little grimy, none the worse for his adventure.

Again was Dick disappointing. He had not had a thrilling escape. He had gone up the ladder, like the gymnast that he was, and had got the woman and the children down, kicked in a window, and rescued a screaming child from a room in which she was locked; and he had not so much as blistered his hands or lost an eyelash.

To the romanticist, this would have been discouraging.

There was but one result from the incident. It had suddenly opened Edith Brandt's eyes to the fact that she loved Richard Braintree.

When she saw him springing up the ladder, and, as she believed, endangering his life, she realized how dear he was to her. From that instant until she saw him safe on the ground, she lived ages.

Both she and Mary had watched him every moment. Neither spoke. Mary saw the deadly pallor on Edith's face and knew she was suffering.

When Dick entered the carriage, Mary took both his hands in hers, and kissed them as the tears streamed down her cheeks. Edith would have given worlds to have done the same; but instead, she only hugged his coat that she held in her arms. Edith recalled Dick's words:

"I take it, you understand yourself and know your own mind. I consider your answer final. I will never broach this subject again to you."

And she kept repeating to herself: "He will never know. He will never know." And as days rolled into weeks,

and weeks into months it became with Edith a clear case of the "worm i' the bud." She felt she could never tell Dick—never let him know. If she had only possessed Pansy's frankness and simplicity, she might not only have saved herself, but Dick also, months of suffering and uncertainty.

And Pansy, the dimpled, golden-haired witch; what was she doing all through the long, brilliant winter? She was so happy in her restored health, so absorbed in the round of gayety, together with the new pursuits, she was drinking so deep of glad youth and pleasure, that she seemed to have no thought for aught else. Did she not hear Love, Love, the boisterous little god, knocking at her door? Did she not hear the wild music, the burst of merriment and victorious shout of the throng of revellers that accompanied him? Did she not know the champagne of love was held to her lips?—that wine that sparkles and bubbles, and intoxicates and inebriates the senses? Did she not know the time had come that, witching and winsome as she was, she must decide whether the seeds of Truth that had been planted in her soul, within the past few months, should be choked by the weeds of vanity, folly, and all unprofitableness, or that they should grow, flower, and perfect themselves in the fulness of golden fruit? Did she not know all this? Did she not see the beseeching glances and hear and feel the burning sighs from lovesick swains, who were ready to swear to her eternal fidelity? Did she not see brave Donald's anxious face? Could she not read the flush on his cheek when he approached her? Could she not feel his hand tremble when it touched hers? Did she know her power, was she playing with him as a cat plays with a mouse?

No; she was not a finished coquette. She was too honest, too artless. She had heard the wild music, and the

knocking, but she did not wholly understand. But Truth dwelt in her soul. The interpreter had but to come, and Truth would be true to her charge.

Donald Barry, heir to one of the oldest names and titles, and to one of the richest estates in England, was considered one of the greatest "catches." There was not an eligible girl in the smart set that would have turned a deaf ear to Donald. But there was but one he cared for, and that was Pansy Brandt. Donald had not a particle of egotism in his composition. He constantly saw Pansy surrounded by admirers. To him, she seemed a being from some other planet. He worshipped her, but it did not seem possible to him that she could love a great, big, coarse fellow like himself.

Donald was happy and miserable by turns; but the time was drawing near for his annual visit to his grandfather, and he determined to tell Pansy all that was in his heart and know the worst. And just as Dick was swinging himself up the fire-escape, down in the tenement district, Donald entered the Brandt home with a manly stride, and with resolution stamped all over his handsome face and figure.

Donald used to wonder what Pansy wore that made her look as if she had little wings all over her. Now, coming in suddenly, he found her, as usual, in a filmy, misty, intangible something that made her seem to him about as substantial as a sifted sunbeam. And the sight of her caused this man, this great, big Donald, that could face a gun without flinching, that was not afraid of a wild bull, or a Texas mustang,—to blush and tremble like a very girl and look as simple as a lad of fifteen that had his first case of love, but had lost his tongue.

Pansy came forward to meet him, with her starry eyes

gleaming, and had he not been blind, he could have read the wistful love with which they were running over.

Under no circumstances was Donald one of the swearing, vehement, protesting kind; but now, he could utter no word, even, of all the many things he had intended to say. He could only stand trembling before her, and blurt out in the most abrupt manner the fact that he was going away.

"Going away!" exclaimed Pansy in a voice full of tears; "going away to leave *me?*"

Oh, the look that came into Donald's face at her words! Talk about the ice breaking up in December, about the sun bursting through clouds! There is no simile that could give the reader an idea of the joy that swept into Donald's face as he exclaimed in a voice burdened with love:

"Pansy, Pansy! Can it be?"

"Donald dear!" she exclaimed, "can't you, can't you see that I——"

No need for more words. They both understood. Instantly the strong man had folded her on his breast, her arms were about his neck. It was a good thing that Donald had eyes to serve as escape-valves for his soul. Otherwise, it surely would have burst for joy; for Donald, the great Texas calf, could not speak, but spangled Pansy's golden head with his tears as he held her closely pressed to his heart.

CHAPTER XLI.

DICK IS MADE HAPPY.

When the Brandts were in England, they had met Donald's grandfather. His lordship had taken a great liking to both Edith and Pansy, and when Donald telegraphed him of his engagement to Pansy, he was overjoyed; and replied that in view of the engagement, Donald might forego his visit, at that time, to England. He also announced his intention of coming to America, himself, in order to be present at the wedding, after which, he should expect not only Donald and Pansy, but also Bennie and Annie to return to England with him to remain for a year.

These arrangements had been agreed upon. And the two weddings were set for the eighteenth of June. His lordship had not been unmindful of Annie, and had looked to it that her dower was befitting his grand-daughter.

At first, it had been intended that Annie and Bennie were to be married at high noon at Grace Church, and Pansy and Donald in the evening at the Brandt home. But Colonel Brandt would have it that the two weddings should take place at his home, and at high noon; and they would all leave on a special train in the afternoon. He

was allowed to have his way, as he declared he was going to have one vacation himself. He was having a special train of cars fitted up in sumptuous style, and was going to take the whole bridal party on a trip to the Pacific Coast. Isabel Stevens and Colonel Evans were to be married at about the same time and had accepted Colonel Brandt's invitation to join his party.

The months were flying by. The winter that had come in early and with a rush, and that in the city had been full of life and gayety, was apparently inclined to take a sudden and early departure. Even March forgot to be tempestuous, and seemed to take on a subtle, ethereal quality, quite unusual. The sun became luminous, the days waxed warmer, and in the glow and glory of spring, there came a bitter contest for supremacy between flower, vine, and shrub. Even the tiny violet peeped out, and seeing sunlight instead of snow, lifted its head, flowered, and grew bold. The great trees coaxed the sunshine into their hearts, and with the sudden rush of sap to their heads, laughed and twined their branches together, dancing in the breeze like regular old Bacchantes.

In the glory of the early spring, the new community of Shamrock, with its newly graded streets, was truly beautiful. The enterprise was promoted wholly by Donald, Dick and Bennie. In addition to the land that Bennie owned, they had purchased nearly a thousand acres more. The town was laid out exactly like Goluckie, but on a much larger scale. Near the center of the land was a clump of fine old oaks, pines, and maples.

When the town was surveyed, they had taken care that this clump of trees should be in the central plot of ground, and this added much to the beauty and symmetry of the landscape.

There were several orchards on the land, together with

many other kinds of trees and shrubs, and when these did not interfere with the agricultural purposes, they were allowed to remain, chiefly for this reason, the place was robbed of the appearance of newness that it otherwise would have had.

The cottages that were modern in design, were all occupied. The schools were opened and filled with happy children under the care of capable teachers. The churches were finished. Stores and shops were opened. In fact, everything was flourishing. Men skilled in agriculture and floriculture had been employed; also the best teachers and instructors in all branches that were required for the advancement of these people in the new community.

The dedication of Shamrock, with appropriate ceremonies, took place on the first day of May. And it seemed as if heaven and earth conspired to create a perfect day. It was a day ever to be remembered, not only by the people that had been so favored as to find there a home, but by the promoters. One thing had happened to make it by far the one supreme and happiest day of Dick's life.

The day before the dedication, Dick, Donald and Bennie, with Mary and a party of young people, had gone to Shamrock to take a last survey of things, preparatory to the exercises of the following day. They had driven from place to place, and at last they had come to the little spring where they drank on their first visit to Bennie's land. It had been made into a drinking-fountain of unique design. It was the figure of Mercy bending forward, with her hands hollowed, to form a cup, from which the water was flowing. Kneeling at her feet was a thirsty beggar, looking longingly and thirstily at the hands held so graciously toward him. In the figure of Mercy, there was an unmistakable resemblance to Edith. The whole was of Carrara marble and exquisitely beautiful, a real work of art. The

little party was loud in its expressions of admiration. Edith, alone, was silent. She had been inexpressibly touched by this tribute, and this sign of continued remembrance on the part of Dick. She was absolutely wretched. Daily she reproached herself for having been so blind as not to have known the difference between pure gold and dross. What she had experienced for the duke, was the beginning of love, which, had the object been worthy, no doubt would have grown into a lasting affection. But it had been killed, and this all-absorbing passion had taken its place, and was eating out her very heart. Every day she realized the worth of this strong man that she had cast aside; but she could not tell him—she could not let him know. Edith's silence had oppressed Dick. He mistook it for indifference. He was as wretched as she. If two minds can affect each other, it is not surprising that they both suffered. They were both wretchedly unhappy, and both thinking constantly of the other.

The party was to spend the night at Mabelthorp, and return from there to Shamrock the next day.

In the early twilight, they were collected in the long drawing-room at Mabelthorp. As usual, when these young people were together, there was no dearth of amusement, and they were discussing some features of the coming weddings. As Annie and Pansy were to be married at the same time, Annie insisted on calling them the "Job Lot" weddings.

"Don't talk about 'job lots' in polite society, sister mine," protested Donald. "Don't you know it's a dead give away. It's equivalent to saying our ancestors were in trade."

"Well, weren't they?" retorted Annie. "Didn't our daddy sell job lots of goods? There's where I was educated in job lots."

"I think job lots just as nice business as peddling fruit

as Eve did, or being in the real estate business like Adam. You must remember we all had our origin in trade," said Pansy.

"Yes," chimed in Bennie, "and please remember that as usual the woman got the best of the bargain. Poor Adam must have been blind, just think of Eve cheating him the way she did—by trading him just a little bit of an apple for all Paradise."

"Moral—beware of the glamour of a woman," exclaimed Donald, dodging a bon-bon Annie flung at his head.

"Adam, the glutton, ate his part of the bargain; but Eve, like all frugal, clever women, stuck to her Paradise," said Annie.

"As little Carl Burton says, 'you can't prove it, I know you can't,' " laughed Donald.

"Yes, I can. Since that transaction, doesn't every Adam swear he is in Paradise when Eve is nigh?" saucily retorted Annie, flinging a coquettish glance at Bennie, as she flitted over to the piano, and began singing a gay little air.

After Annie's song, Mary asked Dick to sing. In this request she was joined by the others. Dick tried to excuse himself. Edith was sitting near him. She had a longing to hear his voice, and turning toward him, she said impulsively:

"For my sake, will you not sing?"

Dick's heart throbbed at her words. He wished himself miles away, but he went to the piano and sang. His hands wandered over the keys in a prelude all in minor chords. Then his voice, rich and powerful, broke forth with plaintive pathos that thrilled and touched the hearts of those that listened. It really startled both Charles and Mary.

"Rough tempests of woe pass over the soul,
The winds of anguish we cannot control;
And shock after shock we are called to bear,
'Til the lips are white with the heart's despair.

"The shores of Time with wrecks are strown,
Unto the earth cometh ever a moan;
Wrecks of hope that set sail with glee,
Wrecks of love sinking silently.

"Many are hidden from human eye,
Only God knoweth how deep they lie;
Only God hears when arises the prayer,
Help me to bear, Oh, help me to bear!"

Mary glanced at Charles and both felt a pang of pity. They felt Dick was singing out his heart's grief. They were sure he loved Edith.

If Dick could have seen the tears that gushed to Edith's eyes as she listened to the song, his heart-throb would have been joy. When he finished the song, he turned to look for her, but she was nowhere visible. He thought:

"She urges me to sing, then leaves the room."

After acknowledging the compliments paid him for his song, he sauntered through the room into the conservatory and out into the grounds. He took a cigar from his pocket and strolled over the lawn toward a rustic seat, and just as he was about to strike a match, on the sole of his boot, he heard a suppressed sob. He paused to listen. The sound was repeated—this time more faintly. It was from some one on the other side of the tree, where he had just sat down.

As he walked over the soft grass there had been no sound from his footsteps. He passed around to the other

side of the tree and was astonished to see Edith sobbing as if her heart would break. She saw him and was at once on her feet. She reeled and swayed for an instant and would have fallen had he not caught her. For a brief moment as his arms encircled her, there was an awful tugging at the heartstrings of both. She did not, as he expected she would, disengage herself from him; and in spite of himself his heart leaped up as he looked at her. Her lips were mute, but some of her pride had gone; he read hope in the language of her eyes as she lifted them and gazed into his. Dick was trembling with excitement. He was holding her, now, in reality, as he had held her in his dreams a thousand times.

"Edith! Edith!" he exclaimed; "forgive me for breaking my word; but I am a beggar, begging for your paradise of love. Oh, dear heart, be kind to me, at least. Perhaps you cannot love me, but——"

"Oh, yes, Dick, it was all a mistake. I did not know or understand myself. Now, if you want me, I am yours,—all yours."

The joy of this frank confession was almost too great for Dick; and he was almost speechless as he held her in his arms and passionately kissed her lips and eyes. After awhile she said:

"You have conquered me, dear."

"My own," he replied as he kissed her; "in mutual love, can one be victor over the other?"

"If it could be, I would be willing to be captive," she replied, as she nestled within his arms.

Dick held her close as he said: "You have suffered so. If I only could have saved you from this."

"I am so glad of it," she replied gazing on him fondly. "Save for it, I should never have known how to appreciate you. I have gained wisdom through experience."

And on this glorious evening, down at Mabelthorp, where the trees and grass were emerald, and the bushes were snow-stormed with blossoms, where the stars were beginning to glow in the vaulted heavens, came this new-born love; and Gotham's smart set bestowed upon the world a second Mary Thornton, who would bless all that she would touch.

Dick still held Edith close. At last he said, "I am afraid to loosen my hold."

"Why?" queried she.

"Oh, my darling, it has all been so sudden, so unexpected! An hour ago I was wretched, miserable, and I fear now, if I let you go, you will leave me, dear."

"Never, never!" she exclaimed, as she twined her arms about his neck, " I know my heart now, and I am yours, both in this world and the world to come."

When the understanding between those two souls became complete, the breeze that had stopped to listen to Dick's first words, began, now, to sigh with great satisfaction,—or perhaps it was with envy,—through the trees. Then Edith and Dick wandered back to the house, which they entered with their faces eloquent with happiness.

When they re-entered the drawing-room, Annie looked at their happy faces for a moment, then exclaimed aloud: "As I live! I believe it's a fresh invoice of matrimonial job lots."

This caused a shout of merriment, and Edith and Dick were too happy to deny Annie's assertions, and were immediately overwhelmed with congratulations.

Ah! there can be some true love developed in the smart set, as well as in the dairy or cottage; where, according to poets, is the only place that true love flourishes. They were as happy as though they had not been millionaires.

And this was principally why the dedication of Shamrock became a red letter day to Dick.

That night, in Colonel Brandt's home, as that gentleman held the hands of Donald and Dick, he said:

"Of all the men I know in the world, you are the two to whom I would most gladly consign the happiness of my daughters."

Mrs. Brandt was also very happy, as both Donald and Dick were favorites of hers.

CHAPTER XLII.

SEEDS BY THE WAYSIDE.

In an elegant private car that was speeding back to New York from the new town of Shamrock, were seated twenty-five or thirty men who had attended the Dedication. Many of them were stockholders in the New Company. They were of course discussing the new project and the dedicatory exercises. They all had the air of men that had been on a regular lark, and were enjoying themselves hugely; Colonel Eversoll had made a delightful address to the new dwellers in Shamrock, brimful of hope and warm-hearted human sympathy.

A group of men were speaking of him, of his kindly speech, and of the man himself; of his generous acts and silent charities. He evidently had many friends among them. As they were talking, the colonel came in breezily from another part of the train. Near where he entered sat the group discussing him. He stopped for a few words with them, and to the question as to what he thought of the new town and new movement, he exclaimed in his emphatic manner:

"Miracles, miracles! I never believed in them until recently. Look at all you fellows who have come down here to look after these poor, homeless devils. Look at Dick,

Donald and Bennie. Look at all the young girls and women that were there to-day, and think what they were one year ago. Then they were souls in embryo. *Now* they all seem like full-fledged gods of some sort. Then look at that town we have just left. It's nothing but a miracle. I believe in occular demonstration. We have had it to-day. Believe in such miracles? Well, rather!"

"And to think Mrs. Thornton is back of it all," said one of the gentlemen. "She must have had wings when she was born."

"Mary Thornton was not always what she is now," replied the colonel. "She was a fiery little thing with a powerful will of her own. She has become what she is through patient study, and a desire to do good. If we could have such religionists as she the sky would be clearer, the stars brighter, and the very hills and valleys would rejoice. Her religion is practical; it is not *all* a theory, a dream. Not a day passes that she does not try to abolish heart-aches and heart-breaks. She understands the grand ideal of Brotherhood. She is trying to aid in creating a new manhood and womanhood. And I believe the world is slowly beginning to realize the possibilities of Universal Brotherhood as never before. If there is a merciful God in the heavens, man should never expect to reach Him until his love is great enough to reach from the hovel to His Throne."

The colonel had grown quite serious. A gentleman who was a strong believer in all forms of orthodoxy, now spoke, and said rather quizzically:

"How tolerant you have become, Colonel. You may become orthodox yet."

"Not while I have brains left with which to think," replied the colonel testily.

"Mrs. Thornton's religion is not so bad," continued the

gentleman who had just spoken; "and if she had refrained from becoming a mind specialist, she would have been all right."

"Her religion can never make driveling idiots of people," said the colonel, "and as for her faith-cures, according to your Bible they have as much, nay, more truth than orthodoxy, which has no evidence. Your Christ *did* teach that cures could be made by faith; but I have failed to find where He taught orthodoxy. Orthodoxy claims that it can by faith and prayer, instantly cure and make white as shining snow the soul of the vilest criminal. If the soul can be so quickly cleansed, then why not the body? The belief in one is not more absurd than in the other. I do not claim infallibility for Mrs. Thornton; but when I looked at those people to-day and saw hope written in their faces where so lately despair had been, and then looked into the faces of all you fellows, and saw what I call 'Brotherhood growth,—the growth that only comes from quickened impulses for good,—I swear, for a minute, I could hardly speak; and I felt that I would rather have the heritage that Mary Thornton could leave than that of any Martin Luther, John Calvin, Bloody Mary or Elizabeth that ever lived. And I would rather stand in the shoes of Gordon, Braintree, or Barry than in those of Napoleon."

All present agreed with the colonel, even the orthodox friend. And they began eulogizing Mary; for they all knew that while she had had nothing to do with Shamrock personally, she was the power behind the throne.

So it is well to pass on and listen to what the next group down the car is saying. They are strangers, except Donald, who is speaking to them of Mary:

"Now it's the little simple things that both Mrs. Thornton and Gertrude drop, that set you thinking, as Ger-

trude calls them,—'little seeds by the wayside.' I never but vaguely understood what I had heard and read about atmosphere; and so, one day I told Mrs. Thornton I did not understand it. She replied:

"'Some day go down to some of the large, fashionable dry-goods stores where the comfortably rich and prosperous 'shop'; then go to one of the large department-stores, say on a 'bargain-day,' and walk about for an hour. Note your feelings. Go to the police court-room when court is not in session, and afterward go to some church, and sit alone in the silence of each place for a half hour. If you will do this, I think you will more clearly understand atmospheric influences, than from all the explanations I could give you.'

"I actually tried it," declared Donald, "and I assure you she was correct. I realize now, what I once could not account for. I know, now, that I have always been particularly sensitive to atmospheric effects, especially from people. Mrs. Thornton is so very practical, and, as I have said before, it is the little things that she says that are more eloquent than stilted sermons."

"I know that is true and that the whole course of a man's life may be changed in the twinkling of an eye," said a middle-aged man who had been an interested listener. "I have, in mind, a circumstance, and as it changed all my preconceived ideas and teachings of religion, I think I must tell you of it. In the early seventies, I took my young wife and went to Helena, Mont. It was then a well settled and flourishing mining camp. There were both a Catholic and a Protestant Church. The Protestant Church was presided over by a well-fed, self-sufficient clergyman, a great stickler for theology and dogma. I never knew him to do anything but preach and pray. He prayed every place he could get a chance,

from a funeral to a dog fight. Soon after our arrival in Helena, the Episcopal Church sent Bishop Nuttle out West to preside over the diocese of Idaho, Utah, and Montana. The bishop settled temporarily in Helena, and held services in the court-house, which was always filled when he officiated. He was, at that time, the youngest bishop in the Episcopal Church in America. He was a grand man. He was not 'one of the boys,' yet he could tell a good story without missing the point, or he could relish hearing one. He was dignified without being austere. He was interested in everything that was being done in camp. He talked with and asked questions of the working-men as they mined in the ditches or were otherwise employed. He was free with them, but not familiar. No man stood in awe of him, yet no man would have taken a liberty with him. They had no good apparatus for extinguishing a fire; but if there was a blaze, the bishop was among the first on the ground, and was always in the thickest and hottest place, working himself, and encouraging and directing others, and he would go home afterward with his hands blistered and his eyes full of cinders. I have told you this just to show you how practical he was. He was always to be found where there was any real good to be done. It is unnecessary to state that he was the most popular man in camp.

"One day a lady called upon my wife. She was the wife of the Congressman from Montana. Her husband was a Catholic, she a Protestant, a member of the bishop's church. She was very beautiful, very cultured, very charming; but very much exercised about church tenets. She liked to discuss the pros and cons of things, and was fond of religious arguments. She tried to draw the bishop into these controversies, but failed. He always managed to keep clear of them. At last she gave up in

despair. The day she was calling, I sat in the room adjoining our little parlor. My wife had been lauding the bishop and saying how much she admired him, in which expressions of admiration she was seconded by her caller in the following language, as near as I can now remember it:

"'Yes, the bishop is a charming man, and I feel quite sure he is a good man; but I don't understand him. He doesn't seem to care a fig whether Henry the Eighth or St. Peter established the Episcopal Church.'

"'But,' said my wife, 'you like his sermons, don't you?'

"'Oh, yes! as far as they go; but he never preaches over twenty or twenty-five minutes, and they usually apply to the things that are around one all the time. He never preaches *doctrinal* sermons. To sum up the whole thing, I think he is a grand man, but his creed might read this way, "I believe in keeping one's house clean, tending to one's family, being kind to one's neighbor and minding one's own business." With all due respect to the bishop,' laughed the lady, rising, to take her departure, 'I believe that is all the religion he has.'

"I was very young then, and had been raised in a strict, orthodox, doctrinal manner; and it had never occurred to me that the attributes which the lady had mentioned belonged to religion. I got to thinking about it, and I began to think it a pretty good creed; and from that day to this I have had no other. It has been enough for me. I had always had peculiar ideas about heaven and a future state. The following Sunday after this call I have just mentioned, I was passing the court-house at the Sunday-school hour, and thought I would go in. For some reason the attendance was not very large on this particular Sunday. Several teachers were absent and the organist had failed to materialize. The bishop was in a dilemma. He

came up to me smiling, and asked me if I could start the tune for the children to sing. It was the old familiar hymn:

"'I want to be an angel,
And with the angels stand;
A crown upon my forehead,
A harp within my hand.'

"As he pointed it out to me he said: 'I have selected this because I thought the children were familiar with it, not because I believe that when we get to heaven we will be angels or play on harps. I think we will be men and women, love and be loved, and have our pursuits and objects of interest and our loved ones around us there as here. There may be angels there; I don't know, but I don't think we become angels.'

"In the twinkling of an eye heaven was changed to me. It became in thought, a place of light and warmth, of peace and rest, and I have never had any other thought about it since than that, if there is a heaven, we would meet our loved ones there and live somewhat as we live here. Very soon after the events of which I have spoken I left Montana and I have never seen the bishop since. But those two little events changed the entire course of my life and way of thinking religiously. So, I can understand how deeply you have been impressed by the many simple things you have mentioned.

"It is practical, simple religion we want. Good deeds are always accompanied by good thoughts, and good thoughts are prayers. So I claim that good deeds, accompanied by good thoughts, are decidedly more efficient than long winded prayers. I am particularly impressed by what I have seen to-day and from all I can learn of

Mrs. Thornton. And Braintree, Gordon and Barry deserve to be canonized for building this town. I learn, also, that Braintree expects to extend his work, by establishing a fund for this purpose. In doing so, he is carrying out my idea exactly. It is one thing I have never been able to understand; why a millionaire should wait until after he is dead to do good works, leaving large sums of money for charitable purposes to be largely consumed by the people that handle it."

Further down the car was another group, earnestly talking. Some one congratulated Bennie on his coming marriage, and asked him how his father took the prospect of his being married.

"Oh, he is all right," exclaimed Bennie. "I think I'm blessed. My father is perfectly devoted to Annie. He can't retire for the night until he has gone to see her. It is the first thing that has ever seemed to take him away from his business. Sometimes, I get half jealous of him, and Annie flirts desperately with him. He has had our house turned inside out, and is refurnishing it in great shape. And he has consented to go with us on our wedding tour."

Benjamin Gordon, Senior, was much like Benjamin Gordon, Junior, excepting as he aged he had grown stout. He was a well preserved man of fifty; rich, comfortable and apparently happy. As the reader passes on to the next group he hears Bennie still chatting about Annie. Here they are discussing Mary, and the young ladies that have been her companions, and their society and philanthropic proclivities, and what they have accomplished through the winter.

One man was saying of Mrs. Thornton: "Aside from her religious and philanthropic work, she has benefitted society marvelously. A year ago society gasped at the

stand she had taken, but all that hysterical opposition has passed away. She gave, during the winter, beside her grand ball, a number of smaller dances, and they were conspicuous for their freshness and wholesomeness. The secluded nooks, the sensuous, languorous music, that makes you feel as if you wanted to hold somebody's hand——"

"Generally the hand of some other man's wife," jocularly interrupted a man that was listening.

"Yes," continued the speaker, "the kind of music on which you drift recklessly down on the wings of time, until you are brought to your senses by a rude shock. All this has been conspicuously absent, not only from her entertainments, but from those of many others in her set. The young girls and women that have been closely associated with her the past winter, have taken their cue from her, and will have only the loftiest and most inspiring music. So I claim that if Mrs. Thornton had never done anything else than this, she would have deserved a crown."

The train was nearing the station at New York. The men rose, yawned. stretched themselves, adjusted their hats and gathered up canes and umbrellas, preparatory to leaving the car. They were all men of the world, yet it is plain from the conversation just heard that these men, though worldly, held beyond the value of rubies, womanly purity and truth.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE ANNIVERSARY.

ANOTHER June, with its lights and shadows has come. It is the first anniversary of the first service in the temple at Bethesda.

Mary is seated in the Bethesda drawing-room reading a letter. Charles enters the room, and Mary exclaims enthusiastically:

"Dear Charles, do come and hear the good news! This letter is from Harry. He will be with us to-day; in fact, we can look for him any moment."

Charles came to the back of the sofa, and as he glanced over her shoulder at the letter which she held in her hand, he asked:

"Has he found Mrs. Tremaine?"

"No, he says he has only waited to keep his promise to be with us to-day; and will return to Europe to continue his search for her."

"Just one year ago to-day since she vanished from sight, seemingly as effectually as if she had been removed from the earth forever," said Charles, thoughtfully. It is very strange."

"I cannot help but feel she is alive and will return," replied Mary in a hopeful tone of voice. "Not a day

since she left, but I have sent my thoughts out after her. They will find her and bring her back."

Charles, who had been leaning on the back of the sofa, toying with Mary's hair, now slipped his arms about her waist, and drawing her to him kissed her affectionately, as he said warmly:

"My own precious wife, your faith is so great that nothing seems denied you. Yes, I, too, believe she will be found. But how about our other guests? Have you heard from all of them?"

"Yes, and Harry's letter completes the list. All our intimate friends that were at our first meeting, one year ago, promised to be here to-day, if alive and well. I have heard from all of them, even from good Dr. Malridge. We will sing a *Jubilate Deo* to-day, Charles dear."

At this moment a servant entered and announced:—

"A lady to see Mrs. Thornton."

"A lady," said Charles; "then excuse me, I will go and look after the preparations for our guests."

He made his exit, and in a moment the servant returned, and much to the astonishment of Mary, ushered in Mrs. Tremaine.

They stood for an instant gazing at each other, Mrs. Tremaine with an appealing expression in her face. Then Mary exclaimed:

"Mrs. Tremaine, can it be possible?" And going to her, put both arms around her, kissing her, first on one cheek, then on the other, then taking both her hands and holding her off at arms' length, gazed joyfully at her, for a moment, as she cried:

"I can hardly believe my eyes! Believe me, I am overjoyed to see you."

There was no mistaking the rapture in Mary's voice and manner. It was loyal and cordial. Mrs. Tremaine had

not spoken a word except to murmur Mary's name. Her eyes were swimming with tears at this warm reception. Mary put her arms around her, and led her to a couch, saying:

"Come and sit here;" and she seated herself beside her, and asked: "Where is little Ruth?"

"I left her on the lawn with Gertrude. My dear Mrs. Thornton, how ungrateful you must have thought me to have run away from you in such an unceremonious manner as I did a year ago."

"Your short note said that there was a most unexpected reason for your sudden departure, which you would explain some time," replied Mary.

"And of course, you now look for the explanation," said Mrs. Tremaine, thoughtfully, a look of pain sweeping into her face.

"Not unless you see fit to give it," said Mary earnestly. "I am so content to see you, to have you here again, that I ask nothing more than just what you desire to tell."

Mrs. Tremaine arose, walked across the room, and stood, as if irresolute, looking out of the window for a moment. Then she returned, and seating herself by Mary and taking her hands in hers, said:

"It is right I should tell you all, even though it does hurt and humiliate me." Then gazing into Mary's face she said: "Mrs. Thornton, don't you know me?"

Mary looked questioningly and thoughtfully at her, then shaking her head, she said:

"No, I confess I do not. When I first met you, your voice seemed familiar, and at times, your face seemed to remind me of some one whom I had known; but——"

"Am I so changed then?" exclaimed Mrs. Tremaine, interrupting her. "Do you not remember the poor, un-

fortunate woman whom you befriended years ago, and who married your friend Mr. Drummond?"

Mary's eyes had grown wide with astonishment, and half rising she exclaimed:

"Mrs. Multon, is it possible?" Then as Mary sank back on the couch, Mrs. Tremaine replied:

"Yes, it is possible. I am the same unfortunate woman whom you so loyally befriended nine long years ago. Listen! When I first met you, I told you all there was to tell about my past life, except my father's name, which was Tremaine, Senator Tremaine of New Hampshire. A year after my marriage to Mr. Drummond, my father died, leaving me sole heir to his large fortune. Having no near relatives, I then took my little daughter, and accompanied by an elderly woman, who acted in the capacity of governess and companion, I commenced a systematic course of travel. I was perfectly content to live for my child. Two years ago, we left Paris for London. You know the rest. The railway accident and the prospect of my child being a life-long cripple almost crazed me. I went from city to city, abroad; to consult famed phsyicians. The result you already know. Finally a longing came upon me to come back to my native country. Shortly after landing in New York, I heard of Dr. Cline, the celebrated German specialist, and came here to Willow Springs, where, thank Heaven, my darling was cured; not by Dr. Cline, but through *you*—my more than friend."

As Mrs. Tremaine uttered the last words, she lifted Mary's hand and kissed it. Mary pressed Mrs. Tremaine's hand reassuringly, as she said:

"But you have not told me all. There is something else I know."

Mrs. Tremaine looked rather embarrassed as she said:

"Oh, Mrs. Thornton, how can I admit my folly!" She hesitated.

"Tell me only what you wish me to know, dear," said Mary encouragingly.

"Well, when I came here to the Springs, among the first persons with whom I became acquainted, was Mr. Burbank. He was very kind to me and to my little daughter, who grew very fond of him. I was very lonely and his companionship was very sweet." Again she hesitated.

"It was very natural; go on, dear, I think I understand," said Mary, reassuringly patting her hand, for a great light was breaking in upon her mind.

"Oh, do not think me weak or foolish," she said anxiously, "when I tell you that his constant devotion to me and my child grew so upon me that before I was aware of it, I had learned to love him. However, I did not fully realize it until——"

Again there came the reassuring pressure of Mary's hand and Mrs. Tremaine continued:

"Until after Dr. Cline had pronounced Ruth incurable. Then, Mr. Burbank came to me, in my sorrow, and told me of his love and asked me to become his wife. Oh, there was one delicious moment of joy, and then the awful realization of what I was, came upon me. I realized I had a husband living, that I had no right to listen to his vows of love. Although in my heart of hearts there was a joy, the joy of his love, I kept saying to myself, 'He loves me! he loves me!' I acknowledge it, now in spite of all the shame and bitter humiliation which followed."

Mrs. Tremaine rose and walked hastily away from Mary across the room. There was a nervous intensity in her manner, as if she wanted to get away from herself, and as if the thought of what she had endured had all rushed back upon her with an overwheming and humiliating force,

more than she could possibly bear. She tugged blindly and ineffectually at the fastenings of her wrap as if they were choking her.

Rising, Mary stepped quickly to her side, and putting the nervous hands to one side, loosened the wrap, and as she laid it to one side, said soothingly and calmly:

"Come, dear, let me understand this matter. You say shame and humiliation. How so? Are you not mistaken?"

"Oh, no, Mrs. Thornton, it was too terribly true. I have lived through the thought of it a thousand times since," said Mrs. Tremaine, making an effort to control herself. "A year ago, you remember, I called here to see you. I was almost happy. My little Ruth was cured. I was loved, and all the world seemed brighter for it. Then, if you remember, you left me for a moment, while you went to give some directions to the servants. I returned to this room for my parasol, which I had forgotten. Your husband and Mr. Burbank were in earnest conversation. I entered the room just in time to hear Mr. Burbank say he was a married man, with a wife and child living. I heard your husband admit the fact. I hardly remember what occurred afterward; nor does it matter. I left hurriedly. Everything seemed a blank to me."

"My dear friend, why did you not come to me?" said Mary.

"I could not. I could think of but one thing, to get away, to leave here forever. I did go, and when I reached New York, I found a vessel ready to sail for England, and since that, I have travelled from city to city trying to forget. But *no* matter where I went your face has been constantly before me, your voice seemed always calling me back. I returned to New York, not intending to come here. Yesterday, your presence seemed so real to me, that

it seemed I could put out my hand and touch you. At last, I could endure the strain no longer. I felt I must see you, so I took the train and came at once. I did not even wait to go to the hotel, but came here directly from the station."

"My dear friend, how you must have suffered!" said Mary. "I am glad you have come to me."

"But, my dear Mrs. Thornton, I have not told you all my troubles. They are of such an unlovely nature that I hesitate about inflicting them on you. Yet I do need your counsel."

"I am prepared to hear everything you may wish to tell me, and to assist you in any way in my power. Let me hear what it is," said Mary encouragingly.

Then Mrs. Tremaine told Mary all about her persecution by Sidney Banks, beginning with the day she first saw him in the cottage of Mrs. Dennis, at Clinton, until the present time. How he had followed her abroad, and from place to place; how he had written to her, and forced himself upon her until it had become beyond endurance. How, after returning to America, he had kept a watch over her; that she could not step out of the house without being followed. Then, she not only told Mary about, but showed her the threatening letters of Sidney, and declared that while she had kept a brave front, she, in secret feared him.

Bad as Mary believed Sidney to be, it seemed to her almost impossible that he could be so low as to try to intimidate and persecute a woman in this manner. She could hardly believe the evidence of her senses as she read the cowardly attacks of this man. But in reading these letters Mary discovered one thing; that Sidney really loved Mrs. Tremaine as much as it was in his power to love

any one, and she saw that he was jealous of Harry. While the whole thing was lamentable, still Mary had to smile as she recalled to herself of whom it was that Sidney was jealous. So she said to Mrs. Tremaine:

"This is all very unfortunate, and we must talk further about Mr. Burbank and Sidney Banks. We will consult my father and husband about them; but now I want to talk to you about your husband."

Instantly, Mrs. Tremaine emphatically exclaimed: "I never want to see him, never—never—never!"

"But, my dear, I am sure he is a very good man," protested Mary.

"A good man!" echoed Mrs. Tremaine incredulously. "Would a true, good man sell himself for gold in order to live a life of luxury? Never, no, never! As for myself, I married him to save the life of my child and would do it again. No, I never want to see *him* again."

"But, if you would see him, perhaps he would set you free," said Mary.

"What matters now whether I am bound or free?" said Mrs. Tremaine with a disconsolate note in her voice.

"But, Mr. Burbank; do you not love him still?" said Mary, trying to detect what hope there was for Harry.

"Love him still!" and her voice had in it an echo of both scorn and sadness. "Love a man that offered dishonorable love to me! Oh, I blush when I think how easily I was deceived."

"I know Mr. Burbank, well," replied Mary, watching every expression of Mrs. Tremaine's face. "I do not think you were deceived; I think there was some mistake." I am sure he loved you, that he loves you now."

It is doubtful if Mrs. Tremaine was aware of the joy that illumined her face as she drank in every syllable that

Mary uttered. Mary saw it, and was satisfied, and she continued:

"But, as you say, it was dishonorable in him, a married man, to offer his love to you. However, we will not talk of that; but were I you I would be free from Mr. Drummond. You are still young and beautiful."

"I shall never love again," said Mrs. Tremaine sadly, "though I blush to say it, I really loved. It was the love of a mature woman. I shall never love another."

"At any rate," said Mary, "you would better come to an understanding with Mr. Drummond. I can help you in this if you will be guided by me."

"My dear friend, do with me as you will," replied Mrs. Tremaine. "For days I have been in a nervous tremor; but already I feel happier than I have felt for a year."

"I shall demand implicit obedience," smiled Mary.

"You are my superior officer," laughed Mrs. Tremaine. "You have but to issue your commands."

"First, you are not to go to the hotel; but are to remain with me. You will give me the checks for your luggage, and I will have it sent to you. Now," said Mary, ringing for a servant, "you must go to your room, and make yourself a prisoner, and remain until I come for you. Don't worry about Ruth. I will have her looked after." And giving the servant, who now appeared, some instructions, Mary parted from Mrs. Tremaine, who followed the maid to her room.

When Mary found herself alone, she laughed softly as she thought: "Was there ever such a happy ending to an unfortunate affair as this promises to be? Now, to find Harry and bring these two together. What a surprise is in store for each of them. Harry should be here very soon." And glancing at her watch, she was about to go

in search of Charles to tell him the news, when she heard Harry's voice inquiring for her. She went forward to meet him, saying brightly:

"I was just about to start out to find you. Come and give an account of yourself."

"You know from my letter all there is to tell," said Harry disconsolately, as they returned to the drawing-room. "I have but one thought. I live for but one thing, and that is to find *her,* and bring her back."

Harry said *her.* He spoke as if there was but one *her* in all the world; and as if that was sufficient distinction to distinguish Mrs. Tremaine from all other women. Mary noticed it, and it was with an amused smile that she asked:

"Suppose you found Mrs. Tremaine? What have you to offer her?"

"My love, my undying devotion."

"But you are a married man," protested Mary; "you cannot offer honorable love to any woman."

"I will get a divorce," exclaimed Harry, desperately; "I will move heaven and earth to obtain it. I will give half my fortune, yes, all to be free."

"The woman you married is not seeking your money. I have seen her. She, too, is in love and wants a divorce. I think I can manage this matter for you."

"Ah, Mrs. Thornton," exclaimed Harry eagerly, joyously, "this is good news indeed. Where—when—how—can this be accomplished?"

"It can be arranged to-day if you will consent to see her," replied Mary.

Harry's face lost some of its joyous expression as he said:

"I wish there were some other way. I would rather not come face to face with this woman."

"I do not think there can be any help for it. Possibly,

it will be necessary for each of you to sign some papers in the presence of witnesses, and in the presence of each other. You need not speak to her nor she to you, unless you wish to."

"That will just suit me, and when it is done I will start with renewed vigor in my search for *her*. Oh!" exclaimed Harry fervently, "if I can only find her!"

"Daily I have sent powerful thought messages to her, and have believed they would reach her and bring her back."

"My dear Mrs. Thornton," replied Harry, "I believe much in the sciences you teach, but I must draw the line here. I confess I have no faith in thought doing what you say, and would rather trust to steam and my own energy."

"Our necessities are often our best opportunities," said Mary impressively. "I did not know in what direction to look for our friend, and felt that if thought could travel intelligently on a metal wire, couched in signs to represent ideas, why should not the ideas interchange themselves between two minds in distant localities, without verbal expression? So, daily, I have sent a message to her, having faith it would reach her."

"Then you think I could bring her back by sitting here and wishing for her?" smiled Harry incredulously.

"Not exactly by wishing, but by learning scientifically, *how* to send your thought out to her, you could make a more intelligent search than by racing over the world in an aimless way."

"I cannot understand how it could possibly be done," replied Harry.

"Certainly not," said Mary. "I admit it is, at first sight, bewildering. As well ask a child to do a mathe-

matical problem who has never learned the multiplication table. You must first learn the science of this truth."

"And you still send your thoughts out, and think they will reach her?" queried Harry.

"I think they have reached Mrs. Tremaine, and will bring her to you."

"I wish I had your faith."

"A life of ease is not always the life to bring out genius or a man's latent powers," said Mary, earnestly. "So it is with adverse circumstances, they prove and develop more than the individual thought or dreamed of. You are being tried, you may yet come to have my faith."

"I hope so," said Harry sincerely. "Until then I must search in my own way."

"As you please," said Mary, "but my way will find her first I am sure. Now if you wish me to arrange this matter of your separation from your wife, you must place yourself implicitly in my hands, for the next two or three hours, and do exactly as I command."

"It's risky," laughed Harry, "but as the reward promised is so great, I think I shall venture to place myself at your mercy. What is your first command?"

"Charles has a den opening off the library. You will find there, to amuse you and keep you out of mischief, all the latest papers and magazines. Go there and remain until I send for you."

Harry had been in this den and knew just where to find it, and telling Mary that he should consider himself a prisoner of war, made his exit.

Mary, feeling overjoyed at the prospect of what the *denouement* between Harry and Mrs. Tremaine was likely to be, went at once to find Charles to put him in possession of all the facts, and secure his help. She was only able to tell him the relation between Harry and Mrs. Tre-

maine, when they were interrupted by the arrival of their guests, and she had to postpone telling Charles of the persecution of Mrs. Tremaine by Sidney Banks, thinking, though, that it did not matter; that she could tell him this afterwards.

CHAPTER LXIV.

AGAIN IS SIDNEY BANKS FOILED.

Dr. Malridge and Colonel Eversoll were the first to arrive, and had been ushered into the drawing-room without ceremony.

"Ah, the colonel was saying, "the very atmosphere of this room does me good."

"So you're feeling all right again?" asked the doctor.

"Humph! well I should say I am! I never felt better, I assure you; I haven't had an ache or a pain for months."

"And you really think you were cured through this science of the mind?" asked the doctor, with a sniff of incredulity.

"I don't know. The doctors claim it was the result of a mental shock. Mrs. Thornton has never said anything about it. I know but one thing about my case, and that is, that I was suddenly conscious that I was without pain, and could walk. For a few days my foot felt stiff and sore and weak; but that gradually passed away, and I have been perfectly well ever since."

"I cannot conceive of a man of your powerful intellect, having any patience with this theory," said the doctor.

"My powerful intellect," echoed the colonel, with a

funny chuckle of enjoyment. "Ahem! If I remember rightly, some of your profession have been questioning whether I ever had any intellect. However, as that is a difficult point to prove, we will not discuss it. What I want to say is this: the allopathic doctors used to speak contemptuously of homeopathic doctors, calling them charlatans, humbugs, fanatics, yet, cures from these diluted remedies are numerous and well established. The metaphysicians are here, and are pointing to results, and it's the results we want."

"And you think your case a clear demonstration of these results?"

"Not mine alone, but many that were with us one year ago; and others that I now know of," replied the colonel.

"Well, I confess to some curiosity in this matter," said the doctor, with a mixture of expressions in his face, "and I have come here according to promise, as I wanted to witness with my *own eyes,* how well these people are."

"Your curiosity will, I think, be gratified," replied the colonel, with an amused grin as he watched the various expressions that had flitted over Dr. Malridge's face. "I met Mr. Grey a few days ago; he has fully recovered and is in active business. In fact, every patient that was here one year ago, has been either entirely cured or greatly benefitted. Not one has died."

"What has become of that old Jew?"

"Solmon? Oh, from being a libel on a noble race, he has become an ornament, an example," replied the colonel warmly.

"When I saw him last, he was a sight to make the very gods weep for pity," declared the doctor.

"Well, he is a sight now, to make the same gods weep for joy. He was enormously rich. He has built and endowed a home for aged Jews. He has also built a sani-

torium for the sick, where they are cured without money and without price. He is devoting himself and his money to doing good."

"You are enthusiastic, Colonel," said Dr. Malridge.

"How can I help it? seeing such results," exclaimed the colonel. "Now let's be honest, let's be fair. You teach resignation to surrounding evils, and a hope of reward after death. The Metaphysicians teach that *now* is the time to remedy evils, and have a heaven on earth, and not postpone it until after death. Now, which is the more sensible teaching?"

Dr. Malridge made no reply to the question; but remarked ironically:

"Well, I suppose you have now become a full-fledged spiritualist, thesophist, or some other kind of an *ist.*"

"Athe-*ist* you called me the last time we were together. No, my old habits are still so strong within me that I am sorry to say I have not got into this line of thought as I would wish."

The colonel smiled a little maliciously at the expression that came into the face of Dr. Malridge, who echoed his words:

"As you would wish?"

"As I would wish," replied the colonel: "that's just what I said, and just what I mean. I can't solve this theory, this new line of thought. If those that practice it can, they can do more than I. But if there *is* anything in it, it ought to be given to the world. I don't know. However, there is one thing about it, and that is, that this world is all we are sure of, and when I see a religion that makes people happier *here,* well, if I ever find that I am obliged to have religion, that will be the religion for me."

Dr. Malridge made a gesture of impatience as he exclaimed: "Call this craze anything you like, Colonel, but

for heaven's sake! don't call it religion; it's an insult to our blessed Trinity."

At this moment many guests came pouring into the room, and Mary and Charles, who as yet, had not seen the doctor and the colonel, came to them, greeting them cordially, when the colonel said:

"Dr. Malridge and I have been making ourselves at home, while waiting for you, and, as usual, have been having a little tilt. I am glad you have come, Mrs. Thornton. I want you to define religion; not theology, but religion. What is it?"

"Religion," replied Mary, "according to my belief, is psychic science; a knowledge of the soul. It is life. Combine religion, philosophy and science, and you have the whole. It is a trinity which comprises all there is, and can be combined in one word, *Truth.*"

"You see, she has a Trinity of her own," laughed the colonel, as he gave the doctor a sly, undignified poke in the ribs.

"But," exclaimed Mary, "I am not going to allow you to draw me into your controversy."

"My dear Mrs. Thornton," said Dr. Malridge, with his gentle, gracious smile, for he was very fond of Mary, "your ancestors must have been a grand set, for you to have inherited so amiable a disposition. The colonel and I are different. We always get into a war of words. *Our* ancestors must have been soldiers or pugilists."

At this moment Gertrude ran to her mother, exclaiming, "Oh, Mamma, Mr. Solmon is coming. I just saw him from the window. Oh, I am so glad," and she bounded out of the room to meet him.

"Is that our old Jew?" asked Dr. Malridge.

"The same; he met me at the station, yesterday, and

brought me these flowers," said Mary, turning to a table on which was a vase, filled with rarest roses.

"Does he cultivate them?" asked the doctor.

"Oh, yes, he is very fond of them, and of all kinds of pets. He will not allow a bird to be shot on the place. In fact, he has a regular menagerie, which, of course draws all the children in the neighborhood to feed and play with them."

Just as Mary ceased speaking, Solmon entered with his arms full of flowers, with Gertrude hanging to his coat, talking as fast as her tongue could fly.

"Here I am, Mrs. Thornton," giving Mary the flowers. "My! Efery pody here?" said Solmon, looking around in surprise at seeing so many people. One could hardly have realized that this was the man that had been so closely connected with Sidney Banks in his efforts to rob General Starkweather of his home. Then, he was sordid, worldly and grasping. He was bent, mentally and physically. He was continually looking down, grovelling for the temporal things of life. Now, he was looking upward, and he was lifted up physically as well as mentally. He seemed to be several inches taller, and much younger, than when he first came into this story. He was now looking after the spiritual and it had transformed him. No one appreciated this change more than Dr. Malridge, and, as Solmon turned toward him, he could but contrast this smiling, well dressed man, to the one he remembered that other day in June at Mabelthorp, nine long years ago. Solmon, now coming up to Dr. Malridge, said, as he presented to him a choice rose, that he held in his hand:

"I know you love flowers."

"So I do," replied the doctor, "but I never supposed you cared for them."

"Ah, I never ust to know dey was so putiful. I never ust to know dot pirds and rabbits have sense. I tink dey vas yust good to eat. I tink only beoples have sense. Now, I know dot everyting dot lives have sense. De putiful flowers, dey nod and nod der hets, and seem to say 'Good morning, Solmon.'"

"How did you learn this, Solmon?" asked the doctor.

"De little anchel child teach me dis—ve go oud to ride and valk und she say, 'See, Mr. Solmon, de flowers say "Good morning," und de pirds und de wind are singing a song for us,' and she vould say little glad vords to dem. I tink it was only a child, but I say to myself, I vish I vas so happy like dot child. Und von day I vas out all py myself, und I see a peautiful pird in a tree, und I say 'Come to me, peautiful pird;' und ven I say dot a great pig lump come right here," said Solmon, placing his hand on his throat. "It most choke me, but I love dot pird so much as never vas, und I say 'come to me, I love you. I vould not hurt you.' Und vot you tinks? Dot pird fly right on mine shoulder, und he say 'twee-twee,' und he durn his head dis vay, und dot vay, und look at me und peck at me, to show me he vos not afraid, und den he fly away. Vell, ever since, I have a great feelings here," placing his hand on his heart, "vot I never hat pefore, und I vos so happy I feel like I vants to dance und sing, und my eyes felt pig und strong und everyting looked peautiful, like it never looked before. Und I tink I peen asleep all my life, und I feel like I vant to pring de whole vorld together, und lay my hands on its head, und say, 'Pe happy, I love you.' Ah, some of dose beoples of de vorld, pees Jews, some Christians, und some pagans; but it vas yust vot Mrs. Thornton say: ve can all be brodders und lofe von annudder. You pelieve dot, too, do you not, Dr. Malridge?"

Before Dr. Malridge could reply, Gertrude came running up to Solmon. She had a small green paroquet in her hands, which Mr. Solmon had given her some time before.

"See!" she exclaimed, "how he has grown, and I call him 'Isaac' after you." And in a moment, Solmon had forgotten Dr. Malridge, and was devoting all his attention to Gertrude.

Dr. Malridge, brought face to face with this man, in whom there had been wrought this marvelous change, had listened to him with surprise, and now watched him with curiosity. The doctor knew that children were intuitive, and felt that the element for good in Solmon must be very great when there could be such fellowship as there seemed to be between himself and Gertrude. And he asked himself:

"Shall I condemn the source through which this change has been wrought?" It was the first thing that had touched Dr. Malridge in connection with Mary's work. And turning to Mary he took her hand and pressing it warmly, said fervently and impressively:

"You are doing a noble work. God bless you, God prosper you, my dear friend."

It was almost the dinner hour. The guests had nearly all arrived. Edith, Pansy and Annie were stopping with the Thorntons. The "Trinity" had arrived and all were in high good humor. Charles had taken Colonel Eversoll to one side, and explained to him about Harry and Mrs. Tremaine. The colonel was in a rollicking mood over the expected *denouement.* Charles had sent for Harry, and seeing him enter the reception-room, they went forward to meet him, Mary saying, as Charles passed her:

"I will go and fetch Mrs. Tremaine," and made her exit.

"Hello, old boy! where did you drop from?" was the colonel's greeting to Harry.

"Straight from heaven of course," responded Harry.

"Oh, indeed. You look so solemn I thought perhaps it was the other place," laughed the colonel pointing downward. "I haven't seen you since the night we climbed into the gallery to hear one of Charles's campaign speeches."

"Ah! Ahem! But you were amply repaid, of course?" laughed Charles.

"Repaid!" exclaimed the colonel, savagely. "Can a man be repaid for being compelled to take a Turkish bath in public? The incense of 300 burners——"

"And as many drinks," chimed in Harry.

"Rose to the ceiling," continued the colonel, "and made the air as thick and as hot as the south corner of——"

"Oh, hold on, Colonel, hold on!" exclaimed Charles, "comparisons are odious."

"All right, I won't say it. I'll just think it." Then turning to Harry, he said breezily:

"Have you found Mrs. Tremaine?"

"No, I have not."

"I have found out something about her," said the colonel mysteriously.

"What is it?" asked Harry eagerly.

"She is a married woman," said the colonel.

"She has a husband living," added Charles.

Harry looked at first one, then the other, and said, "I don't believe it."

"It's true," asserted the colonel. "I know her husband personally. He is a regular scamp."

"Yes," chimed in Charles. "Married her for money and then deserted her."

"The coward, the puppy. I'd like to throttle him," glowered Harry.

"Would you? Well, you shall do it. I know him well," said the colonel. "I'll tell you all about him."

At this moment Sidney Banks entered the door at Bethesda. Charles saw him from where he was standing. He was not an invited guest, and Charles went forward to meet him.

"You were not expecting me," said Sidney, "and I fear I am intruding, but I was unaware——"

"Don't apologize," said Charles cordially; "although not expecting you, there's always room for one more."

"I have only a few hours at the Springs, and I called to see you about a little political matter of importance," said Sidney.

"Politics, is it? Will it not wait until after dinner in which you can join us, and we can have politics afterward? Our dinner is not a formal or state affair, just a reunion. No ceremony is needed, so, make yourself happy and we'll discuss the politics afterward."

As this seemed to suit Sidney, Charles ushered him into the drawing-room. While Mary has gone to bring Mrs. Tremaine, we must ask the reader to go back with us for a few moments, to look after Sidney Banks.

After the stormy interview with Mrs. Tremaine the year previous, Sidney went at once to Clinton, and, without much difficulty, learned who the man was that deposited the money in the bank for Mrs. Tremaine. Strange as it may seem to the reader, he was overjoyed at the discovery, for there were reasons why the exposure of this man would be a double revenge to him, beside giving him a double hold on Mrs. Tremaine, as he thought she would desire to shield him. When he reached Willow Springs the next morning, and found that she had left

the day previous, and that Harry Burbank had followed on the next train, he was wild with jealousy. He rushed to New York, and through the assistance of a shrewd detective, soon traced Mrs. Tremaine to the steamer on which she had sailed.

He supposed Harry had gone with her. He cabled a description of both of them to the detective bureau in London, requesting that they should keep informed of their location from the time they should land in London. Then, he consulted the marine news, and found, that by going at once to Montreal, he could reach London a day or two earlier than by waiting in New York. This he determined to do. And while waiting for his train, he reviewed the situation. At first, the pursuit of Mrs. Tremaine had been with him a case of the unattainable, a case of sheer perversity. Now, this had changed into an all-consuming desire for her, which to this man of fierce passions and impulses, who had never known restraint, and had never allowed anything to stand between him and his wishes, was almost beyond endurance. With the exception of his affairs with the Starkweathers, little that Sidney had ever undertaken had failed him, and yet, in the light of those failures, he felt, in his reflections, as if he had always known defeat. All the success of his business and miserable intrigues paled into insignificance, in his mind beside these failures. He resolved to pursue Mrs. Tremaine to the end of the earth, and to have her or ruin her.

In his wrath, he did not forget his political intrigues, and wrote letters to the political enemies of Charles, urging them to leave no stone unturned to defeat him. He backed this up by a liberal donation to the campaign fund. The result of these efforts has already been seen.

From the moment Mrs. Tremaine landed in London

until the moment the reader finds her safe in Mary's home, she had been under espionage and subject to persecution from Sidney Banks.

At last, Mrs. Tremaine had returned to America, determined, if these persecutions did not cease, to apply to the authorities for protection. Twice did Sidney run across Harry in London; but he could not discover that he ever visited Mrs. Tremaine. This, and the fact that Mrs. Tremaine received calls from, and had the entrée to a circle that Sidney could not reach, puzzled him sorely, and increased her value to him, and in spite of the scorn and contempt with which she treated him, his infatuation deepened daily. He now loved her blindly, madly, and was willing to condone her youthful follies, and make her his honorable (?) wife. But, when in spite of this, she spurned him and threatened to appeal to the laws of her country for protection, he became wild for revenge. When he found she had gone to Willow Springs, he started to follow her, and found on the same train, bound for the same place, Dick, Donald, Bennie, Harry, Colonel Eversoll, Dr. Malridge and many others, and happened to hear dropped the fact they were all to dine at Judge Thornton's, his jealousy knew no bounds.

Mrs. Tremaine, followed by one of Sidney's men, had come down on an earlier train, and when Sidney arrived, this man met him and told him that Mrs. Tremaine had gone direct to Mrs. Thornton's, and her luggage had also been sent there. Instantly, Sidney had a spasm of virtue, and felt indignant that Mrs. Thornton should be imposed upon by a woman of this character.

"The presuming fool," he thought. "She shall pay for this insolence."

That she should dare to ingratiate herself into the good graces of a woman like Mary, and not only dare to

visit her on terms of equality, but to meet under her roof the man who was furnishing her the money to live on, was worse than gross presumption. It was sinful. He was trying to persuade himself into the belief that he hated her, and that his revenge was justifiable. He knew Mary and Charles well enough, that to go to them and tell them the truth would not hurt Mrs. Tremaine. And he did not intend to give them a chance to shield her. But it must be confessed, when he entered Bethesda with these malignant intentions burning in his breast, his resolution wavered, for a moment, but it was only for a moment, and it began to burn more fiercely as he took in all that was going on around him.

The gathering, as Charles had said, was not a formal affair. And when he entered the room, the people were all grouped about, laughing, jesting and enjoying themselves generally.

General Starkweather, who, for some reason, had been detained, entered the drawing-room about the same time as Sidney. He greeted Sidney pleasantly, but Sidney could but mark the difference in his reception and the greeting he gave to Harry, whose hand he took in both his own and gazed at him as fondly as if he had been a son, and said:

"My dear boy, it seems ages since you were with us. I am so glad to see you."

Then turning to his old friends, Colonel Eversoll and Dr. Malridge, he took a hand of each, and the face that was lighted by wonderful blue-grey, lambent eyes, which could gleam at the sight of his dear old friends, became truly radiant, as he said:

"Welcome, more than welcome, my old comrades!" This recalled to Sidney that other June day when these three men stood together while Harry stood near, and

looked on, and it only strengthened his resolve to humble one of them, at least.

Mary did not know of Sidney's arrival. It had been intended by Charles and Mary to have Harry and Mrs. Tremaine meet simply as "Mrs. Tremaine" and "Mr. Burbank." And after they had become reconciled, Colonel Eversoll was to tell them of their true relation. There was to be no public *denouement* of their marital relations. Mary had been saying to Mrs. Tremaine, as they came from her room:

"You made a mistake in not letting Mr. Burbank explain. The marriage was one of convenience on both sides, one of money. They never lived together. The woman he married was a widow with a child. It was not his."

"How like my own unfortunate marriage. Poor man, I am sorry for him," sighed Mrs. Tremaine.

It so happened, as they entered the drawing-room, Sidney was near the door. He was at the white heat of anger, as he stood watching the Triumvirate who were standing directly in the center of the room. Mary was surprised at seeing him; but Mrs. Tremaine, in spite of herself, trembled and turned pale at the sight of him, and sank into a chair near the door. Mary felt disconcerted for a moment, and was about to call Charles to the rescue, when Sidney, pale as death, but with a triumphant gleam in his eyes at seeing Mrs Tremaine so overcome, advanced and exclaimed, loud enough for all to hear:

"My dear Mrs. Thornton, you must pardon me for this intrusion; but you have with you to-day two people that I think if you knew who they were, would not be with you."

Every one became still, and was gazing at him. Mary

had stepped directly in front of Mrs. Tremaine to screen her from view.

"That woman, Mrs. Thornton, is the woman whom you befriended years ago. She fled from you to the protection of a married man—a man who poses the world over as a domestic man, and a model husband and father. That man has, for more than nine years, lived a lie, depositing money monthly, in the bank at Clinton for her support. That man is Colonel Eversoll, and I dare, I defy him to deny it."

Consternation was written on many faces as this charge was hurled straight at the modern Goliath, who, at the moment, was standing erect in the center of the room, with his head held high.

"I dare him to deny it," again reiterated Sidney.

"I don't deny it," exclaimed the colonel. "I have deposited money in the bank for her support, as agent for her husband, Harry Drummond, now Harry Burbank."

Mrs. Tremaine was on her feet instantly.

"Harry Burbank!" she exclaimed. As she arose Harry saw her for the first time, and exclaimed:

"Mrs. Tremaine!" and seemed too astonished to move.

Charles pushed him gently toward Mrs. Tremaine, as Mary said to her:

"Courage, dear. You have found your lover and husband, who loves you devotedly."

As Harry clasped her hand, the colonel held his hand in mock solemnity over their heads, exclaiming:

"Bless you, my children, bless you."

Charles drew back the door to the little temple, and drew Harry and Mrs. Tremaine within, where he left them to straighten out the warp and woof of their nine years of married life.

This scene transpired in a much quicker time than it

can possibly be written. It had caused a wonderful commotion, and no one seemed to understand the situation. Sidney Banks was dumfounded at the turn the affair had taken. He saw, at once, there was something under all this that he did not understand, and when the attention of those present was taken up with Harry and Mrs. Tremaine, he made his escape. So, when Charles turned to look for him, he had disappeared. It was a good thing that he had taken "French leave," as both the general and Charles were greatly incensed at the proceedings of Sidney. Finding him gone, Charles turned to the colonel and said:

"My dear Colonel, I regret this occurrence, but——"

"Good heavens, Thornton, do you think *I* care? Why during my career, I have been so bombarded and lampooned that I don't mind a little thing like that. I have been called robber, assassinator, impostor and everything else, until I thought I could have no new experiences. I am fond of new sensations," said the colonel merrily, "and this is a new one; for it is the first time my *virtue* has been assailed."

This brought a great laugh from every one and then commenced an explanation of the scene which they had just witnessed.

The guests had just begun to grasp the meaning of it all when the servant ushered in Mrs. Preston. Mary went forward to meet her, and Mrs. Preston explained excitedly:

"Mrs. Thornton, you must excuse this intrusion, but I thought I must come and tell you that Dr. Cline received your invitation to dine with you, and he is coming; but he is in a towering rage."

"Towering rage?" echoed Charles, and Colonel Ever-

soll, who had come up to where Mrs. Preston was standing to speak to her.

"Oh, yes, he is furious. I don't like to tell you what it is about; but—but he says you are an impostor, that he is going to expose you before all these people. He says Mrs. Thornton shall not impose upon innocent people. Oh, he is in an awful temper!"

"Is the man insane?" exclaimed Colonel Eversoll.

"Mary, my dear, you must not see him," said Charles.

"What nonsense," exclaimed Mary laughing. Dr. Cline is a gentleman. I am not afraid of anything he will say."

"But, my dear," said Charles.

And, at this instant, the servant ushered in Dr. Cline.

"Glad to see you, Dr. Cline," said Charles, going to the doctor.

"Thank you," replied the doctor, looking very sternly and gravely at Charles. And his expression did not relax as his eyes wandered, for an instant, about the room to those collected there, most of whom knew him. "Thank you, Judge Thornton, but I have a very unpleasant duty to perform."

Colonel Eversoll could not understand this great breach of etiquette on the part of Dr. Cline, who, at all times, was such a courteous, polished gentleman; and he said in a conciliatory tone:

"I hope not, doctor; you know—you see—oh, come, Dr. Cline, you——"

Dr. Cline waived him to one side as he said:

"That's all right, Colonel Eversoll, but I never shrink from what I consider a solemn duty. I wish at this moment, to speak particularly of Madam Thornton, and of what she is doing." The guests were all listening eagerly, with varied expressions on their faces.

"She came here to the Springs, and she said nothing, apparently done nothing, but soon some people claimed to be cured of disease through her, and they say she gives no medicine. It is a mistake. She gives the most powerful medicine. Allopathic doses at that. It is a medicine so powerful, so penetrating, so invigorating, that it is almost enough to raise the dead."

"If you know what it is, and it is so powerful as you claim, why do you not use it?" satirically and cynically queried the colonel.

"Because I cannot obtain it in sufficient quantities," replied Dr. Cline, with a dissatisfied frown on his face.

"Will you not tell us what it is?" asked Charles, good-naturedly.

"Yes, I can and I will. I want that you should all know how you have been imposed upon." He now fairly glowered on the faces that now leaned forward to catch his words. "It is concentrated—sunshine—and hope—Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!" roared the doctor as he grasped Mary's hand and exclaimed:

"Ah, Madam Thornton, when I knew of this gathering, I could not refrain from joining you and your friends, and to make an effort to steal from you if possible, the manner in which you compound the medicine you dispense so freely."

"My dear, dear doctor," said Mary, cordially, "I am so glad you came; I almost feared you would not."

"Then you are not angry at my attack on your method of therapeutics?"

"As little Carl says, 'I'm not mad for keeps,'" said Mary gaily.

The *denouement* of the doctor's display of anger had caused a great deal of merriment to those who now gath-

ered around him, and congratulated him on his histrionic powers, the colonel exclaiming:

"Dr. Cline, why can you not join your forces with those of Mrs. Thornton in a combined attack upon sickness and death?"

"Ah, Colonel," replied the doctor, "I must stick to my old methods; but I will admit this much: that if I could combine Madam Thornton's methods with *mine,* I would add to mine a powerful factor in the cure of disease. But she will not agree with me."

"Yes, I will agree to disagree with you in your methods," interrupted Mary; "but we will still be friends; for I know you have at heart, all that is good for humanity."

Dinner being announced, Harry and Mrs. Tremaine re-entered the drawing-room. The colonel grasped Harry's hand exclaiming:

"Well, old fellow, are congratulations in order?"

"They are, indeed," exclaimed the radiantly happy Harry. "Again I have you to thank."

"Not me," said the colonel, "but Mrs. Thornton," turning to Mary.

"Not me," she exclaimed, "but that all ruling Providence of which it has been said that all things should work together for good."

CHAPTER XLV.

SUICIDE.

Sidney Banks had felt that no matter what the offense of Mrs. Tremaine might be, both Mary and Charles would help her to get away with as little publicity as possible, but he had thought, "If they are religious cranks themselves, there are plenty among their friends that are not like them in that respect, and it is to them I shall look for approval for my conduct." He was so sure he could disgrace Mrs. Tremaine, and put her to flight, that one can imagine what his real surprise was at the turn the affair had taken. Instantly he saw that the colonel had spoken the truth. Then what was under all this? and dreading scorn, contempt and ridicule, he escaped from the house. He went back to New York. He knew every one he met was bowing to his millions, and not himself.

Constantly before him was the picture of the drawing-room at Bethesda; the benign face of Dr. Malridge, the heroic head and face of Colonel Eversoll, the handsome countenance of General Starkweather, with Harry and Charles so happy, and Mary as Queen.

They were all there with their friends. He had known them all his life. Years had passed and while their

opinions were as opposite as the poles, still they were friends loyal and true. He knew that in the midst of affliction all differences were dropped and they stood together like brothers.

He thought of the guests that were assembled there. Even Solmon had been welcomed. He alone was an alien. He had no friend in the wide world that would stand by him through poverty and sickness. The woman he loved had spurned him; he could not understand the relation between herself and Harry. He was benumbed by it all. He wandered about like a man in a dream.

The next morning's papers contained a complete account of the romance and final reunion, of Harry Burbank, the millionaire, and Berenice Allicia Tremaine, daughter of the late United States Senator Tremaine of New Hampshire.

Banks read it all; he felt that there was not another woman in the world for him. He felt he had been wronged, outraged. He convinced himself he had been deceived. But revenge had eaten itself out. He felt desolate and alone. He drank deep. In the stillness of night a shot rang out. The next morning in his sumptuously furnished apartments, he was found dead.

CHAPTER XLVI.

WEDDING BELLS.

If what we read in novels is true, then these several couples of our story should not have been happily married. According to the orthodox belief, some should have been wretched in order to be natural. But, if their surroundings had been good, why should they be unhappy? We were intended to be happy, and as a simple demonstration of *truth* nothing could be stronger than that each Romeo had found his Juliet.

The bridal morn dawned fair. They were not what one would call gorgeous weddings. There was no glare nor blare of trumpets nor scenic display. But they were all that the most fastidious taste could desire, and in this subdued elegance were truly princely.

Pansy and Donald came first with their attendants, then followed Annie and Bennie, Edith and Dick last. Never had Edith's step been more queenly. "My American king," exclaimed Edith, as Dick kissed her.

There was one great surprise in store for these happy people. Just as the bridal party was to leave the Brandt home for the railway station, they were invited into the library, where Mr. Gordon and Mrs. Barry were standing before the officiating clergyman, who soon made them

husband and wife. As quick as a flash the true reasons for Mr. Gordon's visits to Annie were explained; but there was no happier bride on the train than Mrs. Gordon, Senior, with her gray hair, blue eyes, and pink cheeks. Harry and Mrs. Tremaine were of the bridal party at the invitation of Colonel Brandt, as also were Charles and Mary. Norwood Brinsley sent a floral piece for the bridal car. It was a reproduction of the bridal train with love triumphant as conductor, and faith as engineer.

Never was bridal train that left New York so freighted with happiness. All mourning had been turned into gladness. There were no pessimistic hob-goblins, no sloughs of despond. There had been no one sold for dollars. Pluto and Crœsus for once, were vanquished by Cupid.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

00022918825